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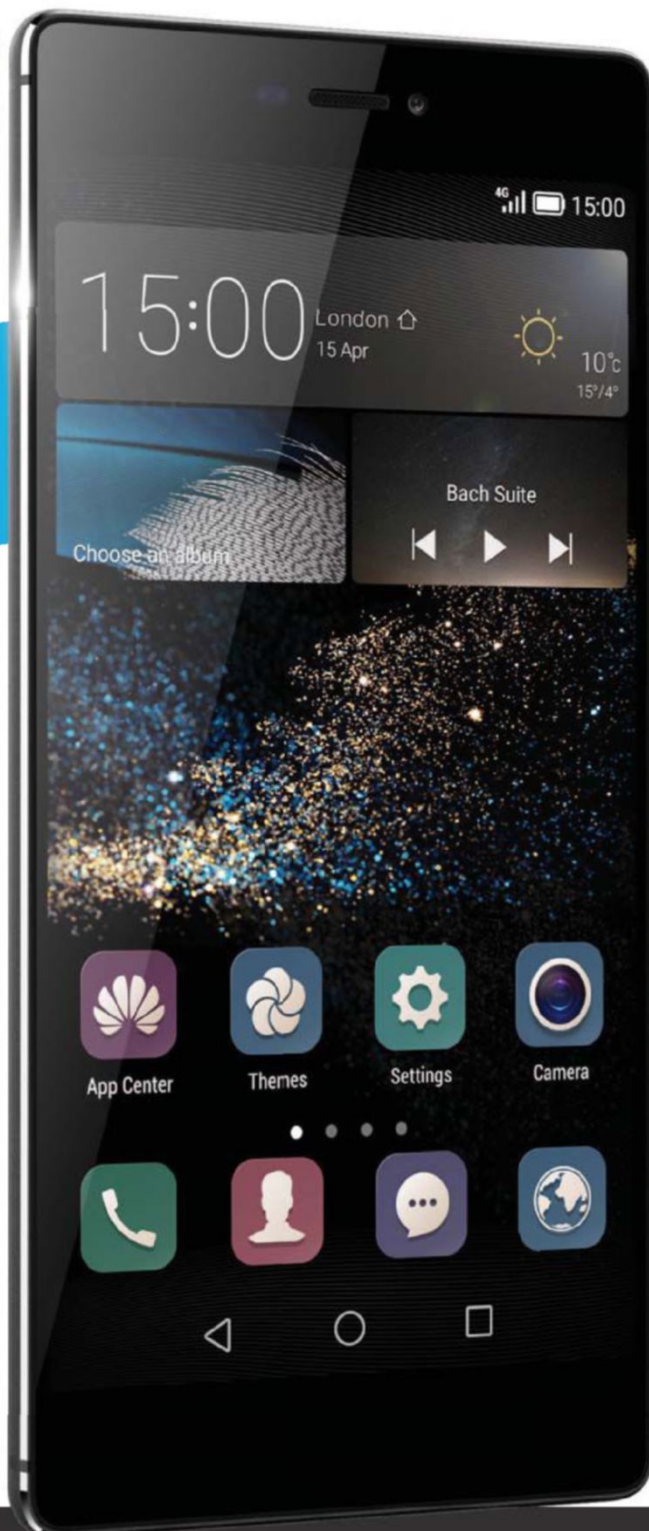
## WIN

£300 Cowin  
Bluetooth  
speaker duo



## THE IMITATION GAME

ZTE BLADE LOOKS A LOT  
LIKE AN IPHONE 6



## WHOLLY SPIRIT

THE LG G4'S LITTLE  
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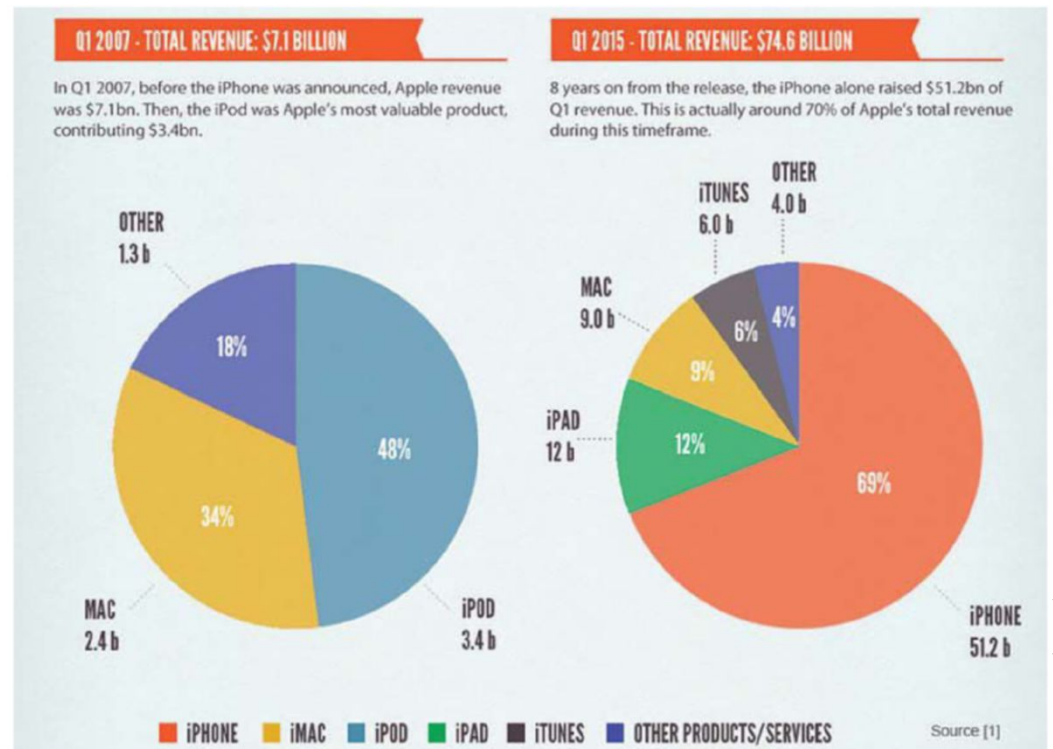
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# August 2015

## Happy 8th birthday iPhone



**It has been eight years since Apple first introduced the iPhone and it took over the iPod as Apple's most valuable product line (see above). More than 700 million people have bought iPhones since 1987 making Apple the richest company in history.**

The iPhone now accounts for 70 per cent of Apple's sales and revenue according to comparison web site comparemymobile.com. Of course the biggest impact of the iPhone was to cause a revolution in smartphone design. This revolution literally destroyed the giants that had gone before. When Steve Jobs announced the first iPhone on June 29, 1987 both Nokia and Motorola couldn't stop laughing. Executives from both of these mammoth manufacturers lined up to dismiss the iPhone as a "toy". It didn't even have any 3G connectivity they laughed and they dismissed Apple as a fruitcake Californian upstart that had no business involving itself in the mobile phone industry. Well, revenge is a dish best served cold. We all know that Nokia ceased to exist as a phone manufacturer and Motorola is now owned by Chinese company Lenovo after an unhappy adoption by Google. America's most famous songwriter Bob Dylan once wrote "he that not busy being born is busy dying". He could have been writing about Apple, Nokia, and Motorola. The message is clear. Complacency and corporate arrogance leads to failure.

## The What Mobile team



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# WIN £300 COWIN BLUETOOTH SPEAKER DUO



This month we're giving away Cowin Thunder (top) and Cowin Ark (left) Bluetooth speakers. The Cowin Thunder is a 360-degree portable speaker that uses special vibration technology to enhance whatever music it plays. Audiophiles will really love the Ark. This is a two-piece speaker system that combines a detachable sound bar with a powerful sub-woofer bass station. You can detach both speakers to listen to music in different rooms or create a high-quality surround sound experience.

Where does the name Bluetooth come from?

- A. A 10th century Danish viking
- B. A 1930s American jazz musician
- C. An oral affliction

Email your entry, name and address (one only) to:

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The winner will be contacted via email the following month.



**Sweating the small stuff:** 1. The promoter of this competition is Clark White Publishing Ltd. 2. The competition is open to all UK residents aged 18 years or over, excluding employees of What Mobile, all participating companies, its agents or families and any company associated with this competition. 3. By entering, all entrants will be deemed to have accepted these rules. 4. All entry instructions form a part of the terms and conditions. 5. Closing date: 5 September 2015. 6. Only one entry per email/IP address will be accepted. 7. The correct winning entry will be selected randomly by the administrator of the What Mobile Facebook page. The winner, who must be a UK resident, will be sent a Karbonn A19. 8. No cash alternative or other device will be offered. 9. No correspondence will be entered into except that the name of the winner will be available upon written request.



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# Asus ZenFone Selfie

The Asus Zenfone Selfie sets out to enhance your vanity. With a massive 13 megapixel front camera, can this be the ultimate toy for narcissists everywhere? Tom Wellburn reports.

**A**sus has been on a roll recently, producing some powerful devices that can be found for a relatively cheap price. Their flagship ZenFone 2 has already got a great reputation in the rooting community, with the device acting as a budget stepping stone into the world of Android Lollipop. Fresh off the launch of this device, the company has now debuted a new phone at Computex 2015 dubbed the ZenFone Selfie, which has its sights firmly set on the Instagram community.

On the design front, it's somewhat attractive but mostly uninspiring. If you've used a Zenfone 2, you'll probably struggle to tell them apart. Aside from the monstrous front camera, it has the same 5.5 inch screen, plastic rear and metal bezel that extends around the edges of the device. Available in a range of colours, the back cover is replaceable for added personalisation. Our favourite case was probably the faux metal back, which gave a fairly convincing impression of a brushed gunmetal finish. Overall build quality isn't up to the standard of more expensive devices but what do you expect – this is a mid-range device after all. One neat trick that it does have up its sleeve is the 'Selfie Swing Case' – a sort of selfie stick that can be optionally attached to the phone.

## SOLID PERFORMER

The display is an LCD full HD panel which should be good enough for most users. While it's not some OLED quad HD monster display with 600+ PPI, the supplied panel is very capable with deep blacks and excellent viewing angles. It also gets topped off with the newest Gorilla Glass 4 for added protection. Internal specifications are very much mid-range, with a Snapdragon 615 acting as the brains for the device. This processor sits just above the 610 and features an octa-core clocked at 1GHZ. It's a capable chip that should work very well with the 2GB RAM. Android Lollipop comes standard on the device, making this another great way to grab the newest OS on a budget.

## CATWALK CAMERA

Of course, the front camera is the major selling point of this device and it really is a narcissist's dream. If you're the type of person who wants to look beautiful all the time, the Zenfone Selfie will undoubtedly have you covered with its absurd 13 megapixel sensor (the same resolution as the rear camera).

With an aperture rating of f2.2, it's not the fastest lens in the world but still a lot better than most other front-facing cameras on the market. Asus has also thrown in a dual flash with 'real-tone' lighting to ensure that you always have a portable spotlight on hand when you want to snap yourself in the bathroom of some nondescript club. Other features include the standard beautification modes for enhancing your complexion and laser focus for sharper images. To further help improve your digital headshot, the company also proudly boasts that the included HDR mode can improve contrast and colour by up to four times. None are particularly groundbreaking features on their own but Asus are the first company to really cram them into a front-facing camera.

## PRICING AND LAUNCH

The Zenfone Selfie has the potential to sell well if the pricing is competitive. It is expected to cost between £130 and £150 (in line with the Zenfone 2). There's currently no word on a release date but various website rumours allude to an 'imminent' launch over here in the UK.



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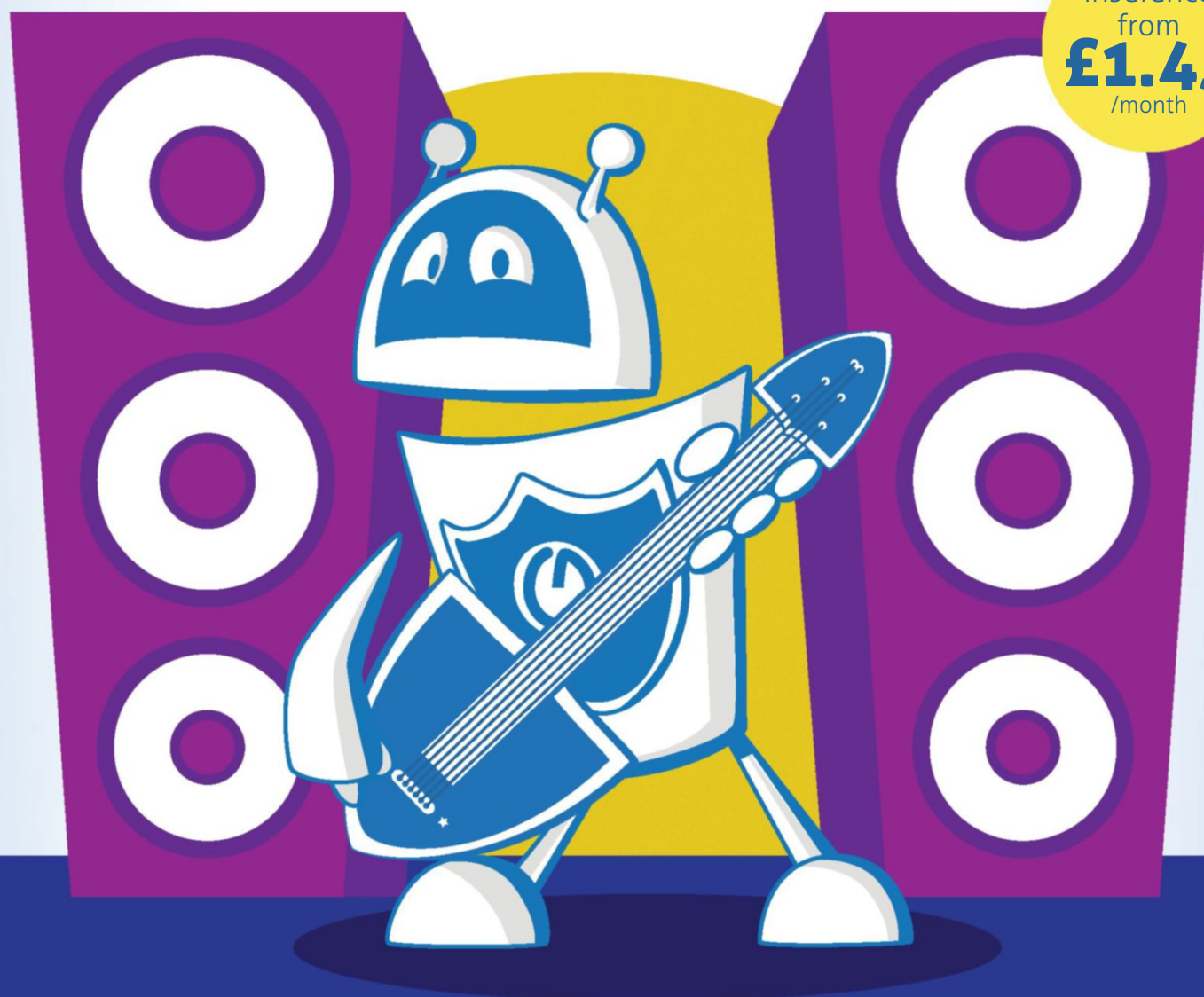
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# Sony Xperia Z3+

Sony's £550 addition to the Xperia range doesn't add much to the already excellent Z3's DNA. But it has enough features to help the brand compete against Samsung, LG and Apple says Alex Yau.

**T**he Sony Xperia Z4 will be named the Z3+ outside of Asia. The latter is more suitable as there are major upgrades that set it apart from the Z3. Whilst this may disappoint those excited about a brand new Sony flagship, the minor tweaks will help Sony compete with the excellent Samsung Galaxy S6, iPhone 6, HTC One M9 and LG G4.

We got our hands on a pre-production model of the Sony Xperia Z3+. The model we played around with wasn't running the final software that Sony will stick on the finished handset, but the design will remain largely unchanged.

## DESIGN

The Z3+'s design doesn't stray too far from last year's Z3. Sporting a rectangular shape, smooth curves and a glass body, the Xperia Z3+ still feels like an upmarket and sturdy device.

With the 5.2-inch all-black screen, we had no problem holding the phone in our hands or reaching any of the side buttons. Weighing 144g and measuring just 6.9mm, it's lighter and thinner than the Z3. This slimmer size hasn't come without compromises, however. The

battery has been cut down from 3,100 mAh to 2,900 mAh, which means it doesn't take as much juice as the Z3.

Look round the back of the phone and it has a similarly minimalist design. The 20.7MP camera and LED flash have been placed on the top left, whilst the Xperia and Sony logos are easily visible.

Move to the left and there's only one slot for both your MicroSD and nanoSIM. Head to the bottom and the microUSB slot is now fully exposed, which allows you to easily plug in your microUSB cable without having to faff around with any annoying flaps. The phone is also dust and waterproof.

## SONY XPERIA Z3+ CAMERA

The 20.7MP rear shooter boasts Superior Auto+, which Sony claims can improve shots in all conditions. All images it took were perfectly decent and the shutter speed was faster than most flagships we've tested.

The 5MP front-facing camera combined with SteadyShot took some decent selfies with little blur. However, our test phone was worryingly prone to overheating when we used the camera app and we received continuous warning messages telling us the camera app would shut down if the device heated up any further.

## SONY XPERIA Z3+ SOFTWARE

The Xperia Z3+ combines Android 5.0 Lollipop with Sony's own user interface. A 'Clear all' button on the multitasking screen was a welcome addition that helped us close all apps in one go. Another neat addition is the option to organise all the apps in your app tray – the area you place all your apps when you don't want them cluttering your home screen – in alphabetical order, most used or any other preference you may have.

## PERFORMANCE

The 32GB of internal storage is double the internal storage of the Z3, which is on par with the LG G4 and Samsung Galaxy S6. A Snapdragon 810 processor and 3GB of RAM meant apps ran without any sluggishness.





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# Giving your phone the shock treatment

Summertime is here. And who of us will not be on a beach, camping at a festival, rock climbing and generally enjoying the great outdoors? While getting out and about makes for a healthy lifestyle, your expensive smart phone prefers to be kept warm and dry. As well as liquid hazards those delicate components don't like to be dropped from a great or medium height. Which is why investing in a ruggedised case this time of year is what we in the review trade call a 'no-brainer'. But what to buy? We've rounded up some of the main contenders in the protection racket.



CARRERROS/FICKR



## 01 / Tech21 Patriot

£39.99

The Patriot, as its name suggests, offers 360-degree screen and body protection against most bumps and scrapes. This rugged case can withstand drops of up to 13ft, whilst the advanced screen protector keeps any potential scratches at bay. It's also dust and splash proof, protecting your phone's ports from any liquid or dust that might otherwise damage your handset.



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### 02 / Urban Armor Gear Scout

£22.20

The Scout meets all military drop-test standards, so you can relax knowing your phone is protected from even the scariest of drops. It's equipped with an armor shell, impact resistant soft core and non-slip ruggedized grip. Don't let all these features fool you into thinking it's a hefty case. Feather-light materials means it won't weight your device down.

### 03 / Seidio OBEX Combo

£70.00

Whether you're by the beach or drenched by a festival downpour, the Obex Combo will ensure the elements don't damage your phone. This case will allow you to submerge your phone in depths of up to 6.6 feet for up to 30 minutes. Better yet, it's certified military standard and can survive drops of up to 6 feet.



### 04 / Spigen Tough Armor

£19.99

The problem with most ruggedised cases is they are usually make your mobile big and bulky. Not the Spigen Tough Armor. This slim and attractive case isn't just lightweight, it also has double-layered protection system and air cushion technology to cushion your phone from severe falls. It won't prevent water damage.

## 05 / RevoTuff iPad Air

£29.99

Not only does the Revotuff act as a military-grade shield against the occasional bump and scrape, it also doubles as a stand to ensure you get a comfortable viewing experience of whatever's on your iPad Air. A textured surface finishes the cases to give it a premium and attractive design.

05



06

## 06 / XQISIT Flex Case

£9.99

The Flex Case may not offer as much protection as the other cases in our list, but it's perfect for those who want to keep their phone protected without sacrificing any of its attractive looks. It helps provide protection against any dangers, features an anti-slip surface and allows easy access to all of your phone's ports.

## 07 / OverBoard Urban Safe 20L Dry Tube Bag

£29.99

Whether you're heading to the beach or going camping, these Dry Tube bags have enough room to keep your smartphones or tablets protected from the elements. It's uses don't stop there either. You can use it as an ice bucket, drinks cooler, or even a pillow.

07



08

## 08 / Tylt Vu wireless charger

£55

The TYLT wireless charger seamlessly adds juice to the Samsung Galaxy S6, iPhone 6 or other wireless charge compatible devices. You can also use it as a stand to watch movies from your phone or tablet whilst they're charging.





### 09 / Cowin Thunder

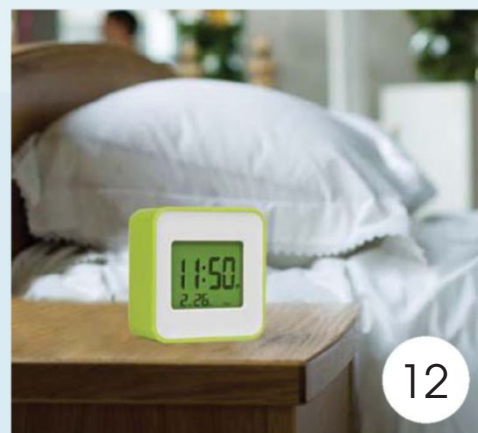
£89.99

The Cowin Thunder Bluetooth speaker uses a unique vibration pad that makes any music played through it reverberate 360-degrees through flat surfaces. This is far from a gimmick and there was a noticeable improvement in bass and treble when we switched the function on. Turn it off and sound quality is still excellent. It works on all surfaces, including glass, wood or plastic and there's even a mountable dock to place the speaker on a wall or window. An aluminium casing gives it a sturdy and attractive design, whilst you can get up to eight hours of continuous play from a single charge.

### 10 / Lava Brightsounds

£39.99

The Lava Brightsounds speaker isn't just an attractive and quality-sounding Bluetooth speaker. It also doubles as a light. Simply press a switch and the lamp lights up, perfect for illuminating any dark campsite or BBQ area you may be in during the summer. It's also works as an ornament that'll surely grab your guests' attention.



### 12 / Smart Clock

£15.95

This clever clock syncs with your smartphone to ensure you never miss an appointment again. Just pair it with the free 'SyncClock' app and the clock will remind you about birthdays, meetings or any other important events. You can also sync it with your phone calendar to keep up with your schedule.



### 11 / XSeries Sneaker Bank

£69.99

Xseries sneaker bank can keep your phone juiced up whilst you're out and about. The attractive sneaker sole design helps it stand out from other power banks whilst keeping it well protected in outdoor environments. It even has two USB ports for charging two devices at once.





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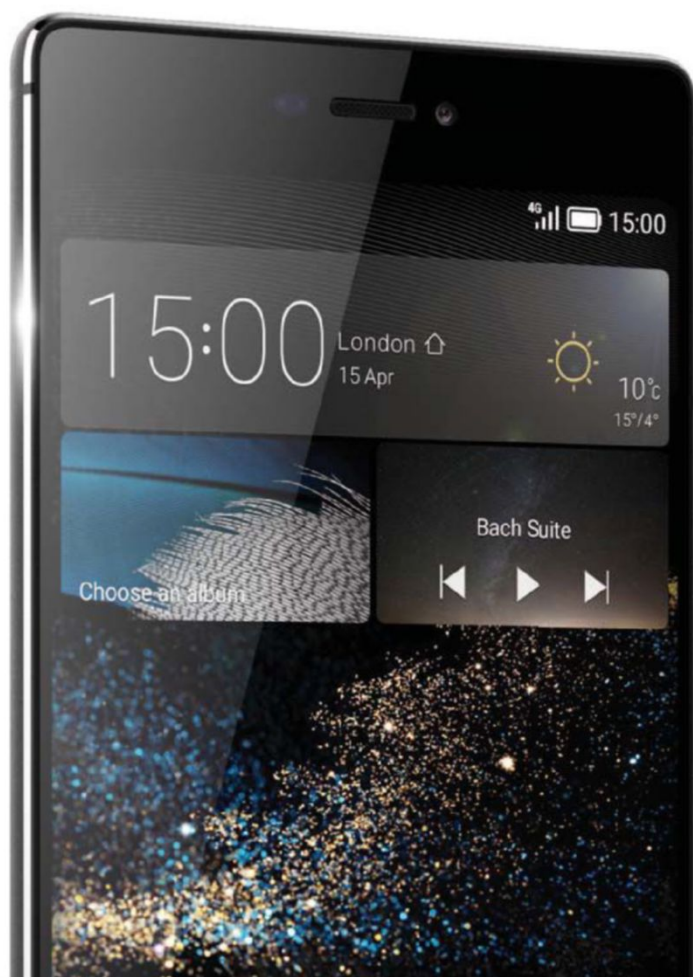
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# WHAT MOBILE

## REVIEWS

This issue's reviews lead with a close look at the new Huawei P8 super-phone. With its class-leading features, the P8 is pitched by Huawei at the usual premium suspects (iPhone 6, Galaxy S6, LG G4 etc).



"The P8 is pitched at the usual premium suspects"

20/ **Huawei P8**

24/ **Lumia 640**

28/ **LG Spirit**

30/ **ZTE Blade S6**

### How we review

To show you where a device succeeds or fails, we grade each device in five key areas.

#### Performance

First we fully test the speed and power of each device.

#### Usability

Next we find out how well the device functions in daily use.

#### Design

Then we rate the style and quality of the overall design.

#### Features

What kind of unique features and add-ons does it have?

#### Final verdict

A rating out of five, balancing cost versus performance.

### Editor's choice

Only the very best devices will win our What Mobile Editor's Choice award.





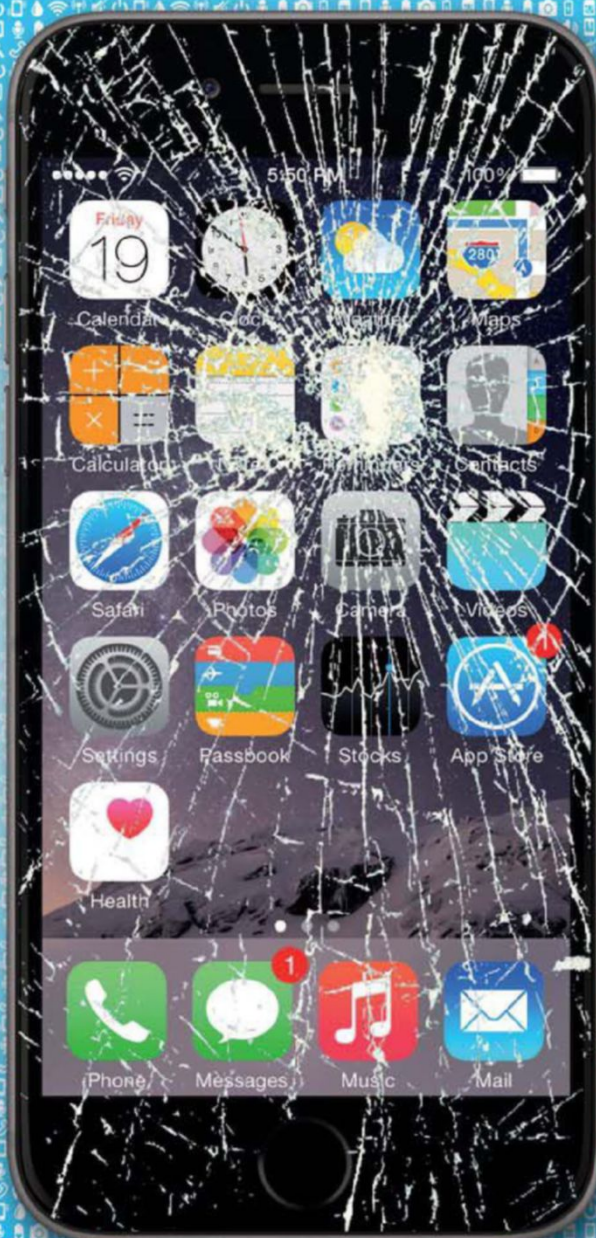


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# Huawei P8

Huawei just got a more serious about competing against the iPhone and other top-tier devices

Price: £380 Reviewer: Alex Yau

## SPEC SHEET

**OS** Android 5.0 Lollipop  
**Processor** Quad-core 2 GHz Cortex-A53 & quad-core 1.5 GHz Cortex-A53  
**Screen** 5.2 inches  
**Resolution** 1080 x 1920-pixels  
**Memory** 3GB RAM  
**Storage** 16/64GB  
**Micro SD compatible?** Yes, up to 128GB  
**Rear camera** 13MP  
**Front camera** 8MP  
**Video** 1080p  
**Connectivity** 4G  
**Dimensions** 144.9 x 72.1 x 6.4 mm  
**Weight** 144g  
**Battery** 2680 mAh

## AT A GLANCE

Speed



3.5

Camera

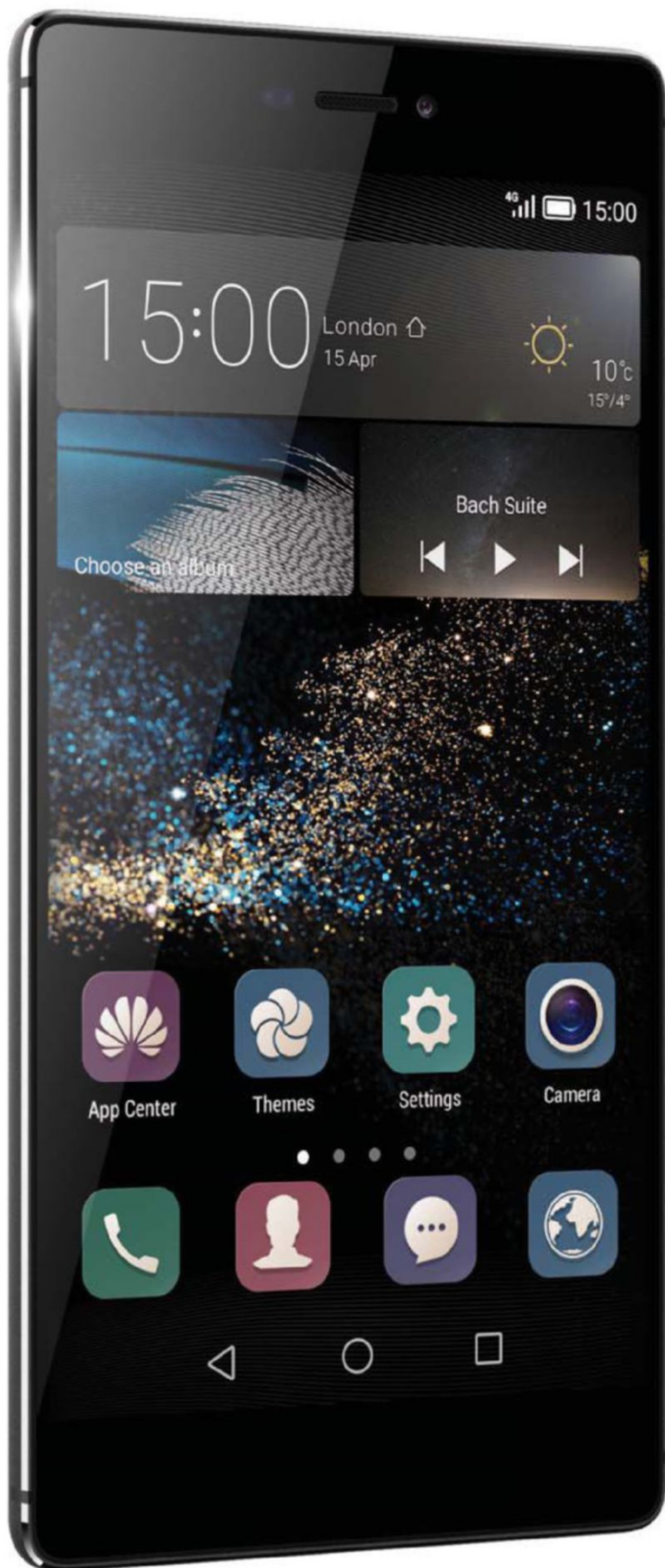


4.5

Battery



4.5





**O**nePlus, Xiaomi and Huawei are the main brands you might not have heard of leading a Chinese assault on the Western mobile phone market. Huawei has established itself as the more notable of the three. Its P series flagships, which combine sleek design and high-end hardware on a budget, has helped it gain some notoriety in the west. So let's have a look at the P8, Huawei's latest flagship. Could this be the device that helps the brand establish itself outside of China?

It wouldn't be surprising when you consider the P8's price. A £395 16GB model brings high-end hardware, fluid software and eye-catching design for half the price of a Samsung Galaxy S6 or iPhone 6.

The 64GB version isn't that much more expensive at £465 either.

The P8 is unfortunately beaten on price by the £179 OnePlus One, another Chinese phone.

So here's a high-end smartphone that won't damage your wallet as much as £799-ish devices from Samsung or Apple.

Is the £380 price worth it or should you spend a bit more on a Galaxy S6 or iPhone?

**"Huawei claims that the P8 has the world's first four-colour RGBW imaging sensor and best-in-class optical image stabilisation"**

## DESIGN

A first look at the P8's rectangular body invites similarities with the Sony Xperia Z3. That's not necessarily a bad comparison as the Z3 is one of the most attractive handsets on the market.

If it wasn't for the speaker and camera at the front the case would otherwise be a black slab. It's a nice touch that Huawei has decided not to plaster its branding on the screen.

The back of the phone is equally as attractive as the front. An aluminium jacket adds a premium quality feel, whilst the camera and flash unit both lie on the corner of a black strip at the top. The Huawei logo is in the middle.

The 5.2-inch screen makes the phone easy to grip with one hand, whilst its slim 6.4mm body makes it slimmer than the iPhone 6. You'll have no problems locating the volume

and power buttons along the edge, whilst two discreet trays house your nano SIM or MicroSD card.

The Huawei P8 is available in four colours; mystic champagne, carbon black, titanium grey and prestige gold. Only the 16GB models are available in champagne and grey, whilst black and gold colours are 64GB P8 exclusives.

## CAMERA

The Huawei P8 packs a 13MP rear camera with dual-LED flash, whilst selfie lovers will be more than happy with the 8MP front-facing camera.

Huawei claims that the P8 comes with the world's first four-colour RGBW imaging sensor, best-in-class optical image stabilisation and a DSLR-quality imaging signal processor. All this fancy technology combined allows the rear camera to produce vibrant and near-



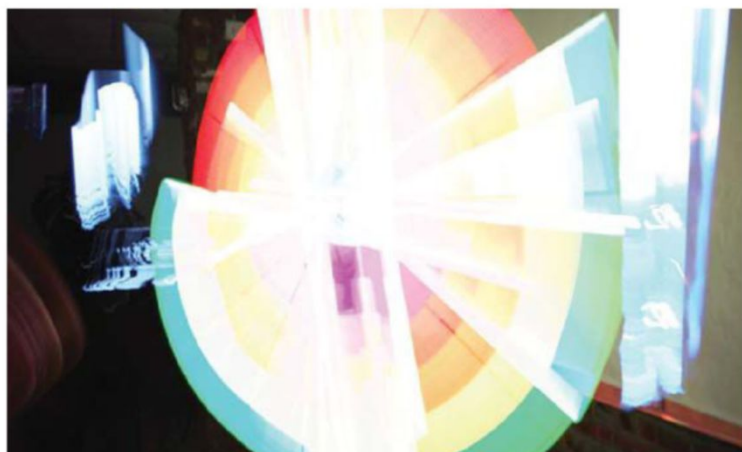
**Back to black** – restrained Huawei logo



**'Emotion' UI** – Huawei's version of Android



**Wallpaper** – choose your colour scheme



**Light fantastic** – 'Light painting mode' creates special FX ...



...but hold the phone stock still or the result can be a mess (above)



professional quality images with very little blur, regardless of how jittery your hands may be.

A quick double tap of the lower volume button allows you to take rapid shots even when the device is locked.

This works well and the phone will even smugly display the time it took to snap an image. Not every shot we took was in focus, however, so the feature isn't perfect.

The P8 even comes with All focus, its own background defocusing effect.

This lets you adjust the focus of a shot after taking it. Whilst it's a decent feature, it's nowhere near as great as similar features found on the Honor 6+ and Samsung Galaxy S6.

'Super Night' mode (see below) did impress us, however. It's perfect for taking photographs in darker settings.

All you need to do is keep the P8 still or use a tripod when shooting with the feature. The photographs we took had a good balance of colour, detail and very little noise or distortion.

Then there's 'Light Painting' mode (see below) which offers four different settings; Car light trails, Light graffiti, Silky water and Star track.

Each creates a photo displaying trails created by car lights, street lights or flowing water. It sounds like a cool feature on paper, but it was a little frustrating when used in real life. You have to keep your phone incredibly still and the pictures we took were either overexposed or taken over with a messy tangle of light trails.



**Auto mode** - gives decent results ...



**Night lights**– 'Super Night' mode brings out colour and detail in low-light shots



## SCREEN

The phone's full HD display isn't as nice to look at as the S6's or the iPhone's when watching videos or playing games, but it's bright and colourful enough to make everything stand out anyway. There are no physical buttons to get in the way of the screen, either, giving you a larger viewing area.

A 5.2-inch screen makes it perfect to hold in one hand and reach all its areas without any trouble, much easier to handle than the massive LG G4 or HTC One M9.

## SOFTWARE

Like all recent Huawei and Honor handsets, the Huawei P8 combines Google's Android 5.0 Lollipop operating system with its own Emotion User Interface.

This makes the design of the software similar to Apple's iOS and, although it has improved over the years, there are still some slight hiccups.

Each app icon has been given a slightly childish skin, which may put some people off. You can download different themes, however, so there is a solution to that problem.

There's also no app tray. The app tray is where you store any apps you don't want cluttering up your phone's home screen.

This means your P8's homescreen will be jam packed with dozens of folders or unwanted apps. It's not a problem that's exclusive to the P8; an app tray is absent from other Huawei and Honor handsets. We really hope that Huawei gains the sense to add this in an update and to its forthcoming devices, especially when its major rivals have quite rightly included it on their phones.

The Huawei P8 does lack bloatware apps, which is a positive it has over its competitors. Bloatware is the software that a manufacturer preloads its device with. The lack of bloatware in the P8 means your phone's memory won't be weighed down by needless and useless apps.

You can even choose to have a picture



**Sony - yet so far** – squint at the P8 and you could be looking at a Sony Xperia Z3

slideshow as your lock screen, so you're not restricted to just a single picture. However, you can't open apps from the notification screen, so you have to fiddle around with unlocking the phone and then finding the app to check your notifications. The keyboard hasn't got the biggest keys either. If you've got big fingers, you'll probably hit more than one button and make regular typos. You can also double tap the screen with your knuckle to take a screenshot. This worked for us each time and is a nice, easy alternative to holding two buttons at once.

## PERFORMANCE

The 3GB of RAM means it can handle games and software with very little stutter and lag. It isn't as fast as the iPhone 6 or Samsung Galaxy S6, but the difference isn't really a deal breaker, especially when you consider the cheap price.

The graphics on games were decent, too. It's not as vibrant as the Samsung Galaxy S6, but it

should still be perfectly fine for most.

## BATTERY

Like most top-range phones such as the iPhone S6 and Samsung Galaxy S6. You can't remove the battery. That shouldn't be a problem, however, as we managed to get a full day out of the 2,600 mAh cell without any trouble. There was the odd occasion where we needed to charge it at the end of the day, but that was rare.

Heavy usage with Bluetooth, RunKeeper, Spotify, gaming and photography did take its toll on the device and I had to charge it within half a day. The S6 and iPhone 6 both suffer the same problems, so it's not uncommon.

There is a useful power consumption monitor on the P8, which tells you which apps are using the battery the most and allows you to switch them off. You can choose which apps you want to function or switch off when it's in standby, helping you preserve more power.

## VERDICT

An attractive device that gives you top-of-the-range specs and a fantastic camera for half the price of the Samsung Galaxy S6 or iPhone. The performance isn't as slick as its major rivals, but that isn't a deal breaker. Especially when the phone costs half the price of the iPhone 6 and Samsung Galaxy S6.

- + Attractive design
- + Night mode is superb
- + Affordable price
- Light painting mode is frustrating to use.
- Software looks childish
- Performance isn't as great as rivals

## OVERALL ★★★★★

PERFORMANCE

★★★★★

DESIGN

★★★★★

USABILITY

★★★★★

FEATURES

★★★★★

# Microsoft Lumia 640

Microsoft is back with an updated version of the Lumia 635? Can this budget smart phone deliver irresistible value for money where its predecessor failed?

**Price:**£109.99 **Reviewer:** Thomas Wellburn



## SPEC SHEET

**OS** Windows Phone 8.1  
**Processor** 1.2 GHz Snapdragon 400  
**Screen** 5-inches  
**Resolution** 1280 x 720 pixels  
**Memory** 1 GB RAM  
**Storage** 8 GB  
**Micro SD compatible?** Yes, up to 128GB

**Rear camera** 8MP  
**Front camera** 1MP  
**Video** 1080p  
**Connectivity** 4G  
**Dimensions** 141.3 x 72.2 x 8.8 mm  
**Weight** 145g  
**Battery** 2,500 mAh

## AT A GLANCE

Speed



4<sup>1</sup>/<sub>5</sub>

Camera



4<sup>1</sup>/<sub>5</sub>

Battery



5<sup>1</sup>/<sub>5</sub>



**S**ince taking over Nokia, Microsoft has embarked on a strategy of releasing competitively-priced smartphones packed with features in an attempt to break the iOS/Android stranglehold. The Lumia 640 is the newest addition to the jam-packed range of Lumia budget handsets. The 640 sits on top of the Lumia 6 range, which is Microsoft's mid-tier above the cheaper Lumia 4 series. Besides the £100-ish price, there is little to make the 640 stand out on paper unless you're a die-hard fan of the Windows Phone operating system. Costing only £109.99 from most retailers, it comes in cheaper than the Moto G and the LG Spirit 4G (see Page 28). So what has Microsoft done to bring in the 640 at such a cheap price? Is this a Windows Phone that has what it takes to stand out from the crowd?

## DESIGN

With their familiar polycarbonate shells and bright colour options, the Lumia line carries an iconic design theme throughout the range which helps to give a very recognisable style. Unfortunately, this also makes them pretty difficult to tell apart. At first glance, you'd



## CAMERA

The camera on the Lumia 640 is of terrific quality for a £109 smartphone. At 8 megapixels, it manages to match other mid-tier phones which cost significantly more. As is typical with lower-end Lumia phones, there is no dedicated shutter button for taking pictures and quick-launching the camera application. The Lumia camera app gives full manual control over settings such as shutter speed and ISO, which allows for plenty of tweaking if you're a budding photographer wanting to take control over your shots..

I was surprised at how good the low-light performance is and how little noise crept into the images. There is some clever post-processing going on under the hood to achieve these results. This is no doubt the result of Microsoft acquiring Nokia's ingenious 'PureView' technology which gives high resolution for a lower pixel count. The only problem is a lack of built-in image stabilisation, which means you'll need to keep your hands pretty steady to ensure those night shots remain sharp.

The 1-megapixel front camera is also surprisingly decent. It is slightly noisy but is perfect for video calls such as Skype. It's actually nice to see a front camera that chooses

be hard pressed to notice any difference between this and the Lumia 630/635. The design aesthetic is almost entirely identical, with everything in the same place as its predecessors.

Look a little deeper and you will notice the 645 is slightly thinner and there have been subtle dimension changes to accommodate for the larger 5-inch screen.

The speaker is in the same awkward spot, making the phone difficult to hold in landscape mode without blocking the speaker vent and smothering the sound.

The obvious change is the disappearance of the Nokia moniker replaced with Microsoft to reflect the final completion of Nokia's demise.

Our review model was the black version with a matte finish.

There are plenty of other bright colour options available. Lumia phones have been released in a mix of matted and glossy variants. Choose glossy if you like a case covered in fingerprints and slippery to grip.

The Lumia 640 is also available in gloss versions and I wouldn't suggest you pick one up for the above reasons. The matt version felt snug in my hand and attracted zero fingerprints during use.



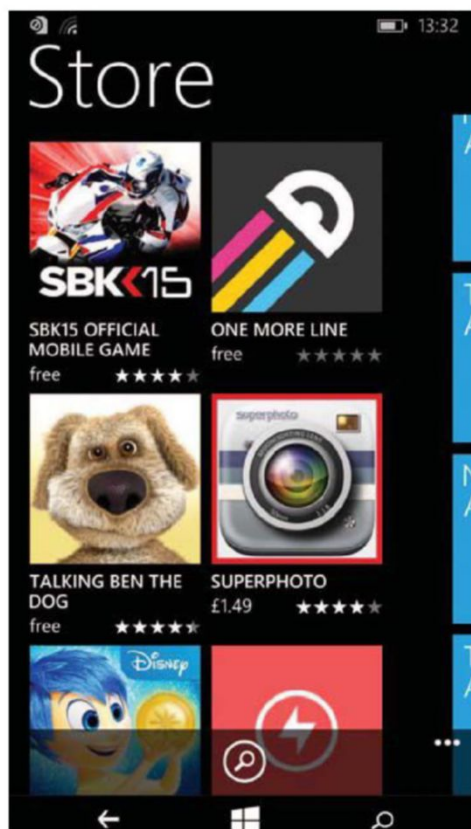
**8MP rear camera** – surprisingly good under low-light conditions considering the price



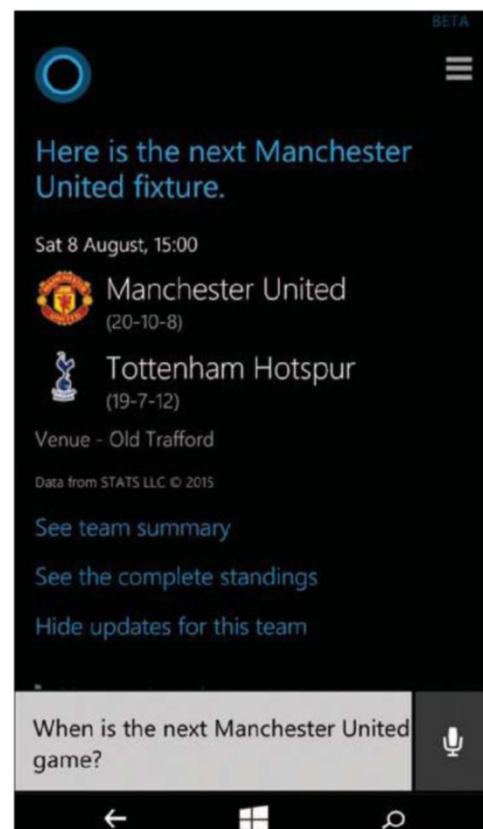
**Windows 8.1** – the 640 uses the latest version of Windows Phone



**Tailor made** – changing the order of tiles is easily done



**Family store** – Windows Store is catching up with Google Play and Apple's App Store.



**Loud and clear** – Cortana voice assistant is present and correct

to keep the noise in favour of a sharper picture, rather than resorting to aggressive reduction algorithms that completely ruins the resulting image.

## SCREEN

The Lumia 640 has a big 5-inch panel with a 1280x720 HD resolution. It's amazing that little more than two years ago, 720 HD panels were still a flagship feature.

There is a pixel density rating of 294ppi, which is slightly under the 300ppi printing standard. In reality, it makes little difference.

The screen looks very clear with sharp text and little pixilation. Viewing angles are very good thanks to an IPS display, though there is a subtle colour deviation at extreme angles.

You get the proprietary ClearBlack built into the panel. This is a technology previously developed by Nokia to enhance dark contrast and colours.

Using three special layers within the panel, it helps to increase sunlight readability and colour reproduction by reflecting unwanted light away from your face. This fancy polarisation filter works pretty well in practise, reducing reflections outside in sunny conditions. Even under the brightest sunlight, you will still be able to see what's on the screen.

## PERFORMANCE

Microsoft has equipped the 640 with a quad-core 1.2GHz Snapdragon 400 processor. This is quite old by today's standards and is the same chip which featured in the 2013 Moto G, a device hailed by many as the best budget handset money could buy.

Aimed at lower mid-level users, it won't set the world alight but it's still a capable workhorse. This is partly thanks to the Windows Phone operating system, which for its shortcomings is incredibly well optimised for use with this chip.

Applications opened very fast with only a slight delay and gaming performance was impressive. Playing Asphalt 8: Airborne was a mostly smooth experience, with a near-consistent frame-rate.

There was a few stuttering issues which seemed to be related to the accompanying audio track but the problem was only

occasional. Whether there was some background issues I don't know but it was a noticeable distraction in some places.

The phone also comes equipped with 1GB ram, an essential addition for any Windows Phone device hoping to make the jump to Windows 10 Mobile. Although 512MB handsets will be supported, Microsoft has stated that full features won't be available to those with less than the 1GB minimum.

## SOFTWARE

Windows Phone 8.1 Update 2, is a huge leaps in bringing the Windows Phone operating system up-to-spec with the Android and iOS competition. Features such as independent volume controls and a dedicated notification centre are now finally available, which help to complement the unique live tile experience.

The OS also has its own dedicated voice assistant Cortana, which sits somewhere between Google Now and Siri in functionality.

"It's incredible what Microsoft has managed to cram into such a cheap and inconspicuous smartphone"





**Manual Mode** – shutter speed 1/1000 and ISO64 results in a much clearer image than Auto

While Google may have the edge on sheer data, Cortana has the ability to set appointments and reminders much like a secretary or personal assistant. It also has a home page which acts as a hub for all your news, appointment information and locations, handy if you need to check your schedule at a glance.

You'll also get a year's free subscription to Office 365 worth £59.99, which gives you Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Outlook, plus 1TB of OneDrive cloud storage.

Unfortunately, the operating system is still struggling to attract third party applications with a woeful selection currently available. The good news is there are viable alternatives within the store which offer much better experiences than the neglected official apps.

## BATTERY

The Lumia 640 has one of the best batteries at this price point. At 2500mAh, it almost matches flagships such as the Samsung Galaxy S6, which narrowly wins at 2550mAh (and so it should, as it costs hundreds of pounds more). For all that juice, you can be confident that will

the 640 will easily last you a day of heavy usage. Basic tasks such as browsing the web, checking emails and listening to music will only sip a few percent per hour from the battery.

With average usage, the device manages to hit the elusive two-day target which is excellent for a phone of this price.

If you're used to having to charge your phone every night, you'll certainly appreciate the staying power of the 640's battery.

As a bonus, the battery is removable. So you can pack a spare one for the next camping holiday and never be out of touch.

## CONCLUSION

Microsoft has managed a very impressive feat with the Lumia 640. They've successfully fixed all the shortcomings which tainted the original 635 and managed to keep it within the same price bracket.

There's little to be disappointed about here apart from the uninspiring design and slightly old processor. Still, Windows Phone is so well optimised that even the latter is only a minor inconvenience.

# A step up from the Lumia 635



The Lumia 640 is essentially an enhanced version of the 635 (above) which came out last year. Featuring the same processor as its predecessor, Microsoft has focused on improving areas where the original phone fell short. Featuring an improved rear camera that finally has a flash and a front camera capable of 720p video, buyers will be well catered for in the imaging department. The screen has also been replaced with a much better HD panel that doesn't have the poor viewing angles of its predecessor. The strange omission of the ambient light sensor on the Lumia 635 has also been fixed, so there's no need to manually adjust screen brightness.

## VERDICT

It's incredible what Microsoft has crammed into such a cheap smartphone. They've nailed all the major points with a great camera, excellent battery and an adequate processor for the well-optimised Windows Phone OS. The problem is Windows Phone struggles to convince the sceptics. If you purchase this device, you really are getting a lot for the money.

- + Great display
- + Excellent battery life
- + Surprisingly good camera
- Poor app store
- Annoying speaker placement
- A little bland

## OVERALL ★★★★★

PERFORMANCE

★★★★★

DESIGN

★★★★★

USABILITY

★★★★★

FEATURES

★★★★★

# LG Spirit 4G

After the success of the LG G4, the company is looking to capitalise by releasing a simpler version that still retains some core specifications. Can it captivate the mid-tier?

Price: £129.99 Reviewer: Thomas Wellburn



**F**resh from the release of the fantastic LG G4, the Spirit 4G is the company's latest budget handset that bears quite a close resemblance to its bigger brother. With 4G as standard and Android 5.0 pre-installed, it offers a cutting-edge Android experience that few users can find at this price-point. At £129.99, it's placing itself

dangerously close to handsets such as the elusive Moto G but manages to undercut more expensive competition like the Galaxy S5 Mini. LG are presumably playing it safe by keeping the device cheaper in the hope of better sales. Problem is, can it fight off the horde of other budget mid-range devices battling for sector supremacy?

## DESIGN

Looking like a shrunken down LG G4, the Spirit is an understated device that doesn't try to stand out or be original. It has a slight curve which is presumably carried over from the Flex series and feels quite comfortable to hold for long periods. The size of the device measures 133 x 66mm, which is pretty much perfect for my hands.

LG has made good use of the real-estate available and the screen is a pleasing 4.7 inches.

While I'm certain they could've squeezed a 5 inch panel onto the device, it would've taken some expensive design engineering which is obviously undesirable for a mid-bracket device.

It's not the thinnest device in the world though, with a 1cm thickness putting it right in the middle of 'average'. On the plus side, it weighs only 124g and is incredibly light.

Colour options are also understated, with a choice of either Titan, Gold or White.

We received the Titan variant, which has a subtle brushed silver finish. It complements the dark front face pretty well and gives a sleek appeal to the device. It also has a removable back cover that can be replaced, provided you notice the recessed area.

As is a running theme with LG handsets, the buttons are positioned on the rear of the device.

This is a design feature that you will either love or hate, depending on your finger length. Some people will struggle to reach any of them and probably find themselves cursing angrily at the inability to unlock the device.

While it's a novel idea, the old phrase 'if it isn't broke, don't fix it' comes to mind. After all, it's not like having volume rockers and unlock buttons on the side are the bane of my smartphone experiences.

## SPEC SHEET

**OS** Android Lollipop 5.1  
**Processor** 1.3GHz Snapdragon 410  
**Screen** 4.7-inches  
**Resolution** 1280 x 720 pixels  
**Memory** 1 GB RAM  
**Storage** 8 GB  
**Micro SD compatible?** Yes, up to 32GB

**Rear camera** 8MP  
**Front camera** 1MP  
**Video** 1080p  
**Connectivity** 4G  
**Dimensions** 133.3 x 66.1 x 10 mm  
**Weight** 124g  
**Battery** 2,100 mAh

## AT A GLANCE

Speed	Camera	Battery
		
4 <sub>5</sub>	3 <sub>5</sub>	4 <sub>5</sub>





**Camera:** – mediocre low-light performance

## CAMERA

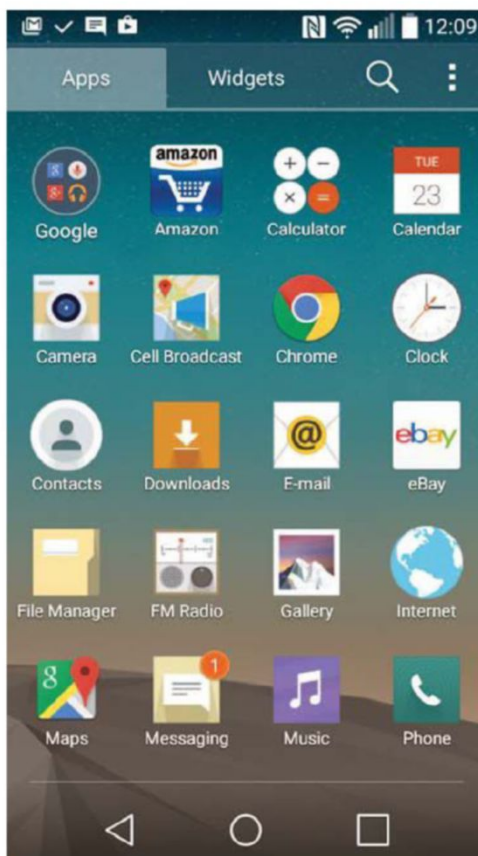
At 8 megapixels, the rear camera of the LG Spirit is distinctly average. Certainly it is not a patch on its big brother the G4 which trounced the opposition in our head-to-head camera tests (see What July issue). Mobile Daylight performance is acceptable, with decent colour reproduction and fairly even exposure across the spectrum.

It does seem to struggle a bit with detail, resorting to some aggressive over-sharpening that is evident up close. Low-light performance is also a struggle for the device, as fine details are lost behind intrusive amounts of noise.

The front-facing camera is pretty poor at only one megapixel.

It's barely enough for 720p video and the images look incredibly soft and pixelated overall.

Even when compared to other single megapixel



**Latest Android** – with custom overlay

front cameras, it's a poor effort on LG's part especially as the cameras on their other phones are so good.

## SCREEN

Things perk up a bit on the display. The 4.7 inch screen on the LG Spirit is an IPS LCD panel, which means great viewing angles with no colour deviation. The display panel has excellent colour reproduction and a good maximum brightness, though it is difficult to see under direct sunlight. A polarisation filter would've come in handy.

The 1280x720 resolution is fairly standard for a mid-range device and offers a pixel density of 312 ppi. This is above print resolution and should result in a pixel-free image. On closer inspection, this was completely true. The panel wasn't the sharpest but the slightly soft image looked fine.

## PERFORMANCE

The Spirit uses a 1.4GHz Snapdragon 410 processor which Qualcomm has built to fit the economics of supplying phones to emerging markets.

It's the first chip the company has released which features 64-bit support and enables a device to use more memory at once. As the Spirit device only has 1GB RAM, a 64-bit chip is irrelevant for real-world use - a bit like driving a Ferrari on the M25 in rush hour. The engine will do 180mph but the road and traffic won't let you go above 60mph.

Even so, this Snapdragon is a very capable mid-range chip that should be fine for a typical budget-phone user. There's a tiny bit of lag on the home screen when swiping and opening applications but it's hardly noticeable under normal usage conditions.

Gaming performance was a little less impressive. My usual benchmarking title Asphalt 8: Airborne struggled to cope on high settings, with noticeable frame rate issues. While it was still playable, I would hardly call it a smooth experience. Turning the settings down to medium improved matters. Battery life is distinctly average, lasting a day of moderate usage and not much more. If you're a heavy user, don't rely on the 2100 mAh pack it to get through an entire day.

## OPTIMISED OS

The Spirit comes with the latest Google Android 5.0 Lollipop with LG's own custom UI overlay, the experience is responsive and fluid. It's clear that Google has made plenty of allowances for lower-spec hardware and it's great to see the OS performing so great on a cheap device.

It carries the 'Material' look that Google has implemented for the newest version of the OS, with colourful flat icons and plenty of visual animations.

A lot of the applications are yet to implement the 'Material' design, though this will change over the coming months as the OS becomes more widely adopted. Google Now is also available and still light years ahead of the competition, providing solid results and information for just about everything I threw at it.

## VERDICT

At only £129.99, there's little to criticise in this budget mid-range device. It has enough performance for most users and comes with Android 5.0 right out of the box. The only problem is the weak front and rear cameras which distract from an otherwise competent package.

- + Excellent display
- + Good performance within UI
- + Android 5.0 on-board
- Poor front camera
- You'll either love or hate the rear buttons
- Understated design

## OVERALL ★★★★★

PERFORMANCE

★★★★★

DESIGN

★★★★★

USABILITY

★★★★★

FEATURES

★★★★★

# ZTE Blade S6

You may think the Blade S6 is a deliberate copy of an iPhone 6. We couldn't possibly comment.

Price: £169.99 Reviewer: Alex Yau



**T**he ZTE Blade S6 is a dead ringer for an iPhone 6. Look closer and you'll see its poorer build quality reflects the mid-range price.

But for £169.99 can you really complain?

That cheap price slips it into the same market as the Moto G and One Plus One. Paying that amount gets you a decent camera as well. So is the ZTE S6 Blade just another cheap Chinese copy. Or does it have its own quality features to help it stand out?

## DESIGN




You don't even have to squint your eyes to draw comparisons between the ZTE Blade S6 and a well-known device from Apple. ZTE has shown no apparent shame in ripping off the iPhone 6 with the ZTE Blade S6's design.

That does make the ZTE Blade S6 look attractive and there are some details splitting the two devices apart. Instead of having any physical

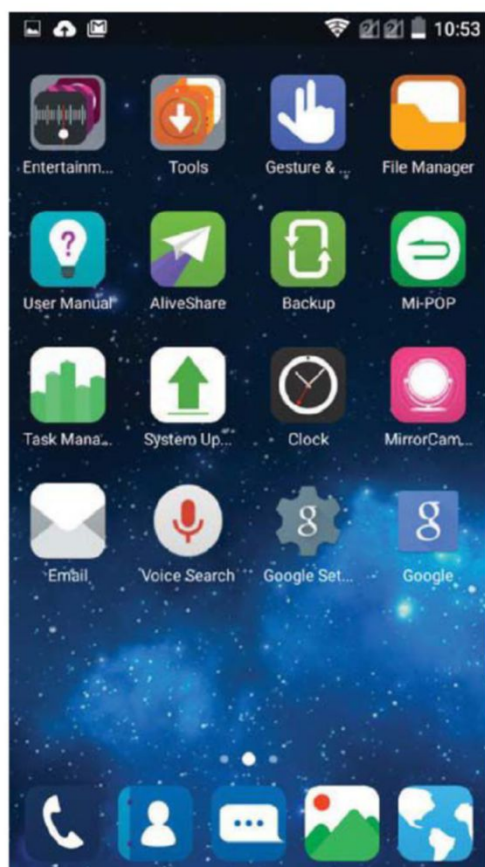
## SPEC SHEET

**OS** Android Lollipop  
**Processor** Snapdragon 615  
**Screen** 5-inches  
**Resolution** 720p  
**Memory** 2GB RAM  
**Storage** 16 GB  
**MicroSD compatible?** Yes, up to 64GB  
**Camera** 13MP rear and 5MP front  
**Video** 1080p  
**Connectivity** 4G  
**Dimensions** 144 x 70.7 x 7.7mm  
**Weight** 154g  
**Battery** 2,400mAh

## AT A GLANCE

Speed	Camera	Battery
		
3 <sub>5</sub>	3 <sub>5</sub>	3 <sub>5</sub>





**Emotion** – the name of the custom interface

buttons, the ZTE Blade S6 has three touch-sensitive keys. The centre key stands out thanks to a blue LED circle, which is a nice touch.

Head to the back and you'll think that the back is made of premium metal. Look a little closer, however, and the phone's cheap price begins to rear its head.

The plastic back feels cheap and picks up scratches quite easily. On the side you'll easily notice the poor build quality of microSD and SIM slots.

It's a shame – considering phones like the Honor 4X, which cost around the same price, prove that it is possible to get premium-quality bodies on a budget price.

## CAMERA

## VERDICT

The ZTE Blade S6 is definitely more than just a cheap iPhone 6 look-alike. A good camera helps it stand out from the rest of the mid-range crowd. And performance is surprisingly good. Only poor build quality and feature-lacking software blunts the Blade. The price is the most attractive, however, and those negatives shouldn't put you off this decent mid-range phone.



**Sharp shooter** – auto focus can be slow

A 13MP camera is quite an impressive addition to this £169.99 device. An LED flash and decent 5MP front-facing camera complements the package.

The main camera app is pretty fiddly to use when trying to get back to the main camera app or view any images you've taken. Focusing also takes a long time to start up, which it decides not to do most of the time.

Many images we took during the day looked bright and sparkling with good lighting and accurate colours.

Night time shots were not as successful and a lot of the shots appeared far too dark. HDR mode improved this somewhat, so we'd recommend keeping that on whenever you take photographs.

There's a decent amount of shooting functions

on offer. Simple Mode is what you'll be using to shoot most of your pictures and there is a range of filters to Instagram-ready all your images.

Expert mode gives you white balance, ISO and exposure options to help you take higher quality, professional DSLR-like images. DSLR cameras are basically the standalone cameras that many pro photographers use themselves.

Videos can be captured at 1080p, but quality isn't that great. There's no Optical image Stabilisation to keep your videos steady either.

Ignore all these points, however, and you'll realise that the camera on the ZTE Blade S6 is decent for the price you're paying.

## PERFORMANCE

Like Huawei, which combines Android with its own Emotion UI, the ZTE Blade S6 combines the latest Android Lollipop with its own custom interface with the cutesy name MiFavour 3.0. It's not the most attractive user interface we've seen on an Android phone. The garish colours of the icons seem to have been designed with children in mind – it doesn't have the same quality of other user interfaces.

One problem that's plagued all devices made primarily for the Chinese market is the lack of an app tray. This is where you store all your unwanted apps and the ZTE Blade S6 unfortunately lacks this.

Thus your home screen will either be cluttered up with dozens of folders and apps you hardly ever use. The front LED lights up to notify you of any messages, which is a neat little touch.

The ZTE Blade S6 runs on Qualcomm's Snapdragon 615, chip set, which means it's a pretty capable phone for intensive gaming, general tasks and smooth navigation.

We tested games like Galaxy on Fire 2 and Hearthstone and noticed no problems with lag or stuttering.

Battery life is also decent. The phone gets through a day of regular usage without giving up the ghost. Push the processor a little harder, with some intense games and 4G browsing however, and you'll find yourself reaching for the charger more often.

- + Camera is decent
- + Cheap price
- + Surprisingly good performance
- Design will divide opinion
- Software is lacking
- Poor build quality

## OVERALL ★★★★★

PERFORMANCE

★★★★★

DESIGN

★★★★★

USABILITY

★★★★★

FEATURES

★★★★★

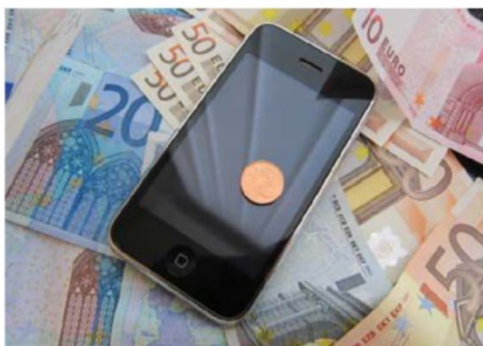


# ROAMING HOLIDAY

Going abroad? **Tom Wellburn** tells you how to avoid mobile phone 'bill shock' when you return (especially outside the EU).

**P**icture the scene. You're at the top of the Empire State Building, only to discover that your phone has suddenly stopped working. A little confused, you continue as normal and enjoy the remainder of your holiday. You've had a good natter with your mates and sent plenty of selfies documenting your experience. Then you get home and find an odd letter from your mobile service provider waiting on your porch. To your horror, it's a bill for £3,800. Yet that's exactly what happened to 16-year-old Casey Snook when she took a break in New York back in 2013.

Travelling abroad with your phone is a lot like playing with fire, you never know just how much it will cost you. The problem stems from an issue



called Data Roaming, where your phone connects to other mobile data networks not affiliated with your own provider. When international networks have a roaming agreement, it allows the user to conveniently connect in places outside of their home country. This would be great if it wasn't for all the eye-watering fees involved. You've likely heard numerous horror stories from people getting charged through the teeth for simple tasks like checking emails and posting on Facebook.

### EU CAPPING

The good news is that roaming abroad, particularly within the EU, has gotten a lot cheaper recently. This is in part thanks to new deals agreed by the member states which puts a maximum cap on the amount of money a person can be charged for using a mobile service abroad. The cap includes everything from mobile minutes to data, so you can rest assured that your bill won't escalate into crazy amounts.



# EU ROAMING COSTS (AS OF JUNE 2015)



## O2 ROAMING COSTS

### Pay Monthly

**Landlines:** 18p per minute  
**Mobiles:** 18p per minute  
**Receiving calls:** 4.8p per minute  
**Sending texts:** 5p per message  
**Data:** 19.6p per MB\*

### Pay As You Go

**Landlines:** 18p per minute  
**Mobiles:** 18p per minute  
**Receiving calls:** 4p per minute  
**Sending texts:** 5p per message  
**Data:** 19p per MB

### Additional Plans

**O2 travel:** O2 will only charge you £1.99 per day for unlimited data on pay monthly (plus standard data fees). On O2 travel Pay and Go, £1.99 will get you a daily allowance of 50mb with no additional bills.

\*Data capped at £48 max usage allowance



## THREE ROAMING COSTS

### Pay Monthly

**Landlines:** 18.8p per minute  
**Mobiles:** 18.8p per minute  
**Receiving calls:** FREE  
**Sending texts:** 5.9p per message  
**Data:** 10p per MB

### Pay As You Go

**Landlines:** 18.8p per minute  
**Mobiles:** 18.8p per minute  
**Receiving calls:** FREE  
**Sending texts:** 5.9p per message  
**Data:** 10p per MB

### Additional Plans

**Feel At Home:** Applies to 18 destinations. Receiving calls completely free, make outgoing calls and texts to UK for free, use data for free. \*Call to localised numbers within the country will still be charged.



## EE ROAMING COSTS

### Pay Monthly

**Landlines:** 18.8p per minute  
**Mobiles:** 18.8p per minute  
**Receiving calls:** 4.9p per minute  
**Sending texts:** 5.9p per message  
**Data:** Available only via add-on\*

### Pay As You Go

**Landlines:** 18.8p per minute  
**Mobiles:** 18.8p per minute  
**Receiving calls:** 4.9p per minute  
**Sending texts:** 5.9p per message  
**Data:** Available only via add-on\*

### Additional Plans

**EE Extra plan:** Entitles users to free calls, texts and data in over 40 European countries

\*50mb £3 and 100mb £5 for 24 hours, 200mb £12 and 500mb £25 for 7 days



vodafone

## VODAFONE ROAMING COSTS

### Pay Monthly

**Landlines:** 18.7p per minute  
**Mobiles:** 18.7p per minute  
**Receiving calls:** 4.9p per minute  
**Sending texts:** 5.8p per message  
**Data:** 19.8p per MB

### Pay As You Go

**Landlines:** 18p per minute  
**Mobiles:** 18p per minute  
**Receiving calls:** 4p per minute  
**Sending texts:** 5p per message  
**Data:** £3 a day for 100mb \* 19p thereafter

### Additional Plans

**Vodafone EuroTraveller:** Entitles Pay monthly and Pay and go customers to use all their available UK minutes, texts and data for an extra £3 per day

The current price limits as of 2015 are:

- **Data:** Capped at €0.20 (20p including VAT) per megabyte. This has fallen from €0.45/MB (46p including VAT).
- **Monthly data cap:** The maximum you can be charged in one month for using data in the EU before it's cut off remains at €50 (£49 including VAT) – the level it's been at since 2010.
- **Outgoing calls:** Capped at €0.19 (19p including VAT) per minute. This has fallen from €0.24/min (24p including VAT).
- **Incoming calls:** Capped at €0.05 (5p including VAT) per minute. This has fallen from €0.07/min (6p including VAT).
- **Texts:** Capped at €0.06 (6p including VAT) per text. This has fallen from €0.08/text (8p including VAT).





### PROTECT THE CUSTOMERS

The EU has also introduced other measures that aim to protect users less familiar with the

concept of roaming charges. It's now compulsory for mobile operators to 'warn you' of the costs when entering an EU country, which ensures you don't travel abroad thinking it's okay to make two-hour calls to your significant other. It's also compulsory to protect users against racking up massive amounts of roaming charges through unknown data downloading. Data now has a fixed €50 cap unless agreed with your operator. You will also receive a warning when you are within 80 per cent of your international data limit.

If you're travelling within the EU this summer, we've compiled a quick roundup of the top four networks and the roaming charges you'll receive. Notice just how much cheaper things are when compared to five years ago.

The key to avoiding a huge unexpected mobile phone bill (especially outside the EU) is to disable your cellular Data and Data Roaming features as soon as the plane lands. For iOS (opposite) go to SETTINGS. Then choose CELLULAR. Android and Windows users will find a similar option under their SETTINGS. Even if you don't use your smartphone you could still be billed for apps that automatically update themselves and fetch new data in the background without you being aware of the megabytes used.



### THREE PAVING THE WAY

Three currently has the best roaming service, providing incredibly cheap rates that all other

providers would do well to take notice of. The Feel At Home service really is as good as it sounds, offering no additional charges when in any of the 18 participating countries. There's no need to opt in or out and it works for both pay monthly and pay as you go customers.

### TURN OFF DATA ROAMING

Perhaps a little obvious this. If you don't actually need to use data while on holiday then it's best to turn data roaming off. Phones and tablets have this option checked by default which allows them to connect to networks outside of the UK. Venturing into your network settings will likely reveal a checkbox where you can disable it. If you want to go completely cold turkey, there's also the option of completely disabling mobile data altogether, which will achieve a similar effect.



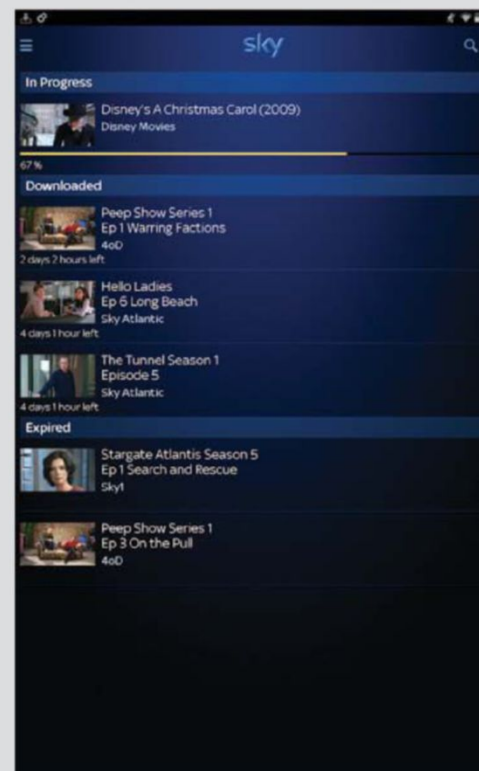
### USE WIFI

Most hotels and restaurants now have a free WIFI service running within their walls, meaning that if you really need to

post those holiday pics there is still plenty of options available. If you're abroad, you should immediately ask the hotel reception if they have a WIFI service within the building. That way, you'll still be able to talk to friends back home by using your data connection and applications such as WhatsApp and Skype.

### DOWNLOAD BEFORE YOU GO

Caching is a term you'll hear a lot in the world of technology and it means storing data temporarily for future requests. Plenty of mobile



applications now have the option to pre-download or cache things such as podcasts and videos, so you can enjoy them without needing to worry about using your data connection. Sky Go run a service with their application where you can easily download programmes onto your mobile device for offline viewing.

### SIMPLE STEPS TO SAVE CASH

If you're on any network besides

Three, you'll need to find ways that reduce your data and call-time consumption. If you insist on being one of those people who can't leave

their work or social life at home, there are still several other ways to avoid the horrible experiences that might come your way. All it takes is a little common sense and careful planning to make sure your next bill doesn't skyrocket. Below, we've listed a few tips for next time you're on holiday.





### BUY A LOCAL SIM CARD'

Buying a pre-pay SIM card abroad and topping it up is actually a lot easier than you would

expect. Pop into any Iphone store and ask for a SIM card, though it might be helpful if you have a subtle grasp of the language. The only thing to bear in mind is that your phone MUST be unlocked and readily available to take any SIM card. Buying a foreign SIM does mean that you'll be given a differen tphone nnumber,

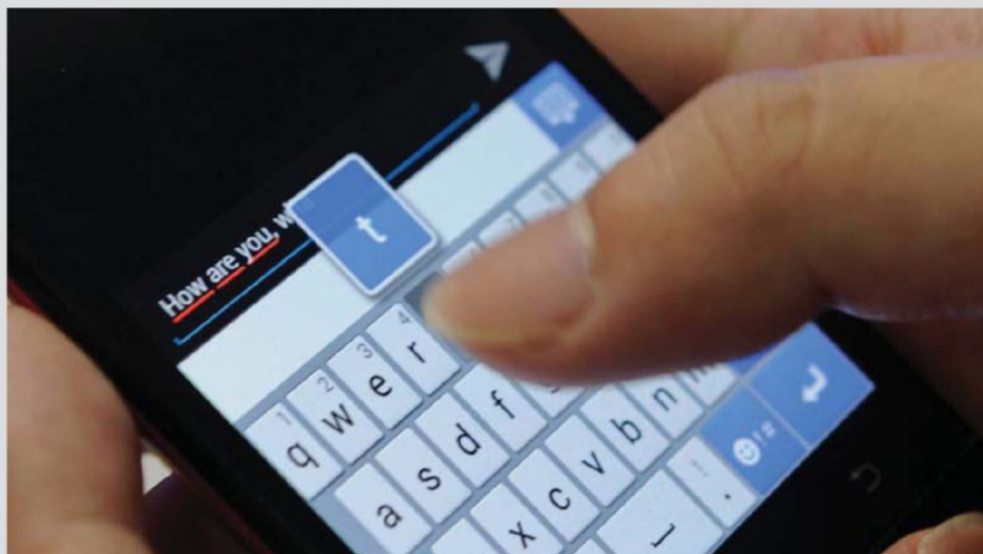
which you'll need to notify to your friends and family by text or email.

### DON'T TALK, JUST TEXT

You may not be aware but most roaming plans allow free receiving of texts when abroad. If you're the type of person who still wants to keep in touch but doesn't want a charge, it might be an idea to step into the time machine and use the old SMS services. You will still get charged a small amount for sending a text, so it's important to alert anyone back home that you won't be replying to any of their messages unless it's pretty urgent.

### DISABLE PUSH NOTIFICATIONS, UPDATES AND AUTO-SYNCING

Notifications and automatic updates are one of the biggest background data drinkers on your device. Always working in the shadows, they constantly keep your phone up-to-date with the latest applications and emails.







GPS apps can guide you around any major city like a local. Ace reporters Alex Yau and Tom Wellburn give the two biggest guide apps - CityMapper and Google Maps - a run for their money with a race across London.

**B**ig Ben, the Tower of London, Piccadilly Circus, Buckingham Palace and more; each year London's finest landmarks attract millions of tourists from around the world. Fitting most of these icons into a single day is hard. Not only do you have to note their location, you also have to work out the quickest and most efficient way of reaching them.

That's why a decent navigation app for your phone will come in handy. Good navigation apps do much more than simply showing you how to get from point A to B, however. They offer multiple routes, GPS to help you track your movements or the different available transport options, including train, bus, bike, walking or car.

Google Maps and

CityMapper, two of the most popular navigation apps, offer all of these options. But which is actually better for travelling on a budget? We decided to put them both to the test in a race to two of London's most iconic landmarks; the Natural History Museum and Piccadilly Circus. Alex would be using CityMapper and Thomas would be relying on Google Maps. They'd start the race from our office in Angel, travel to the Natural History Museum and finish off outside at Piccadilly Circus.

In order to simulate the experience that someone visiting London for the first time might have, we laid a few ground rules down. They had to search through each available option before we could make a decision. Car and cycling journeys were out, as we had neither of them. And, to make the journeys as affordable as possible, expensive cabs were also out of the race.



We had to follow the quickest route each app suggested. That meant neither of us could use our own knowledge of London and any other routes if it meant straying away from what the apps recommended. All autosaved destinations were cleared from both apps, so they were using them from scratch.

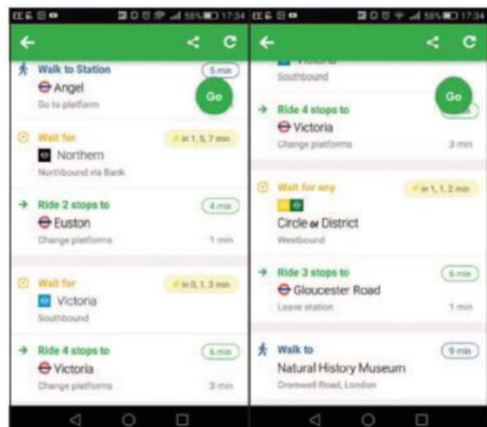
Racing through London's busiest hotspots during rush hour. Can't be too stressful, can it?





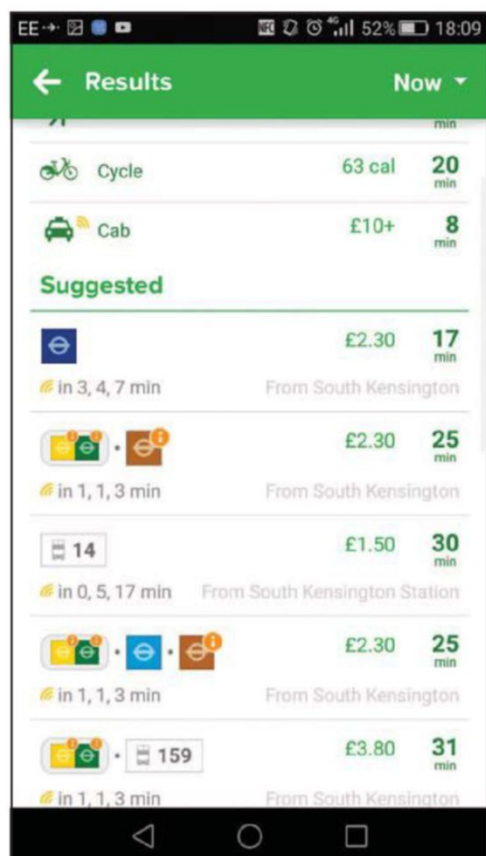
# CityMapper

## Alex's Journey



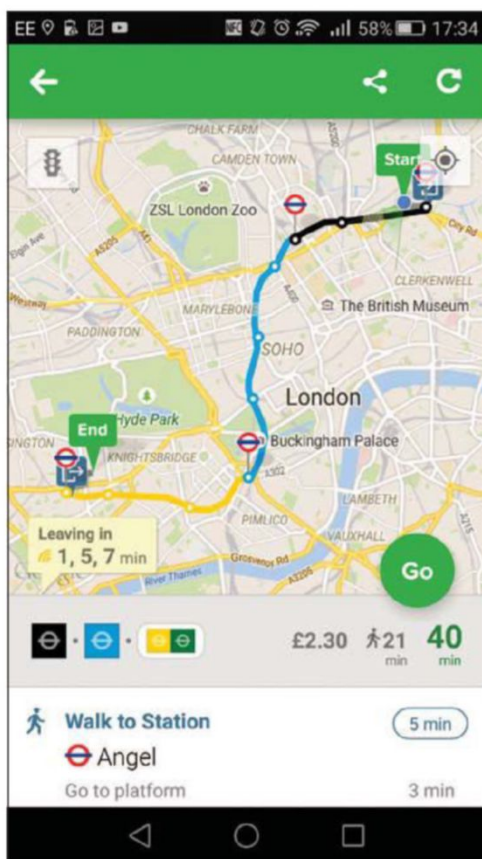
The sun was blaring as Tom and I stood anxiously outside the What Mobile offices at half past five to start our race. I booted up CityMapper and started typing in the Natural History Museum as my destination. Tom had already set off as CityMapper was still searching for the quickest route. Not a good sign.

Seconds later CityMapper had finally come up with a 40-minute journey as the quickest route. It suggested I travel from Angel to Euston,



change at Victoria and then catch the District Line to Gloucester Road. I was off, but Tom was nowhere to be seen. A worrying thought.

I'd made it down to Angel Tube Station only to be momentarily blocked by a mess of rush hour traffic delaying my entry into the Tube Station. Minutes later I finally made it through to the Tube Station and quickly weaved my way through the commuters who were rushing to get home. Similarly massive crowds greeted me upon my arrival at Euston and Victoria



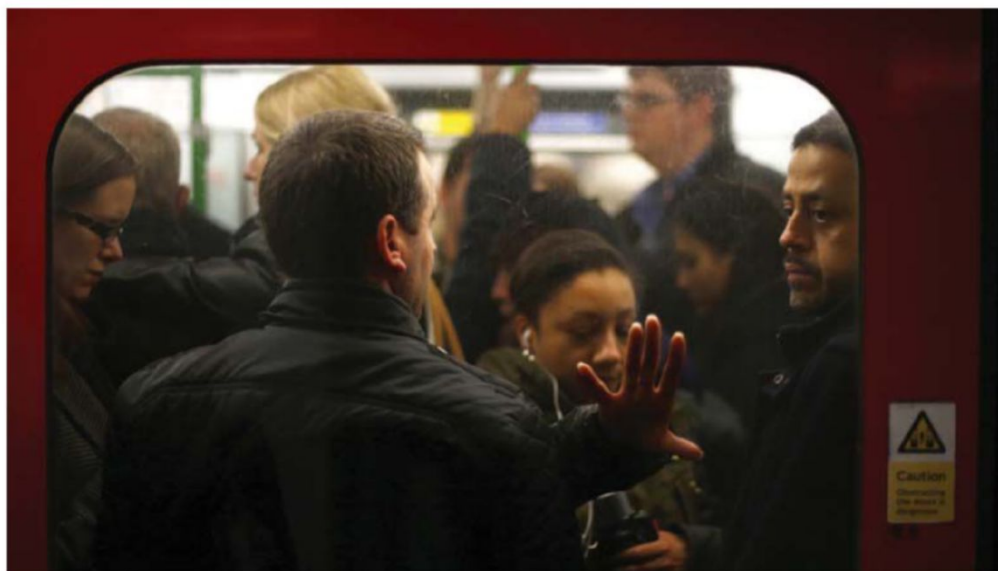
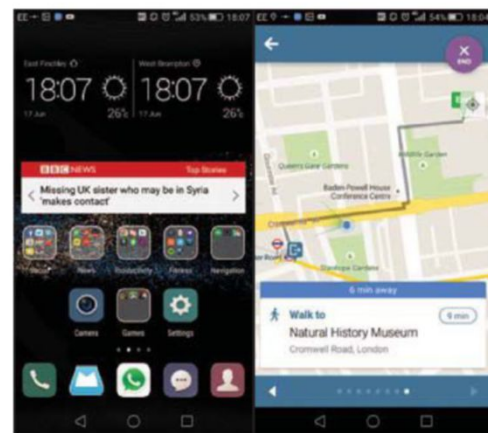
station. The huge crowds slowed me down, but worryingly there was no sign of Tom anywhere. Had Google Maps sent him on a different path or was he far quicker than I was?

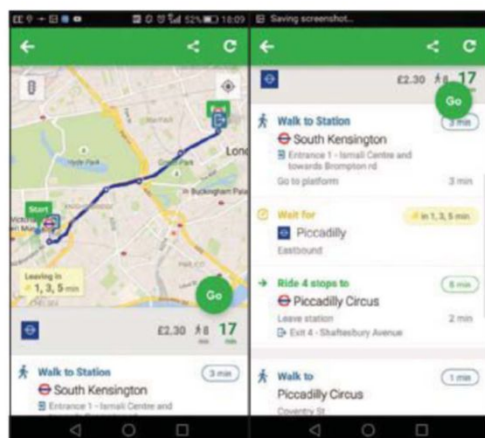
## WHAT A CIRCUS

I soon alighted at Gloucester Road and arrived at the Natural History Museum a short walk later. My arrival time was 18:07, three minutes quicker than CityMapper's predicted journey time. I quickly booted up CityMapper again to enter Piccadilly Circus as the final leg of my journey. The journey was much quicker; a straight hop onto the Piccadilly Line from South Kensington would get me to Piccadilly Circus in 17 minutes.

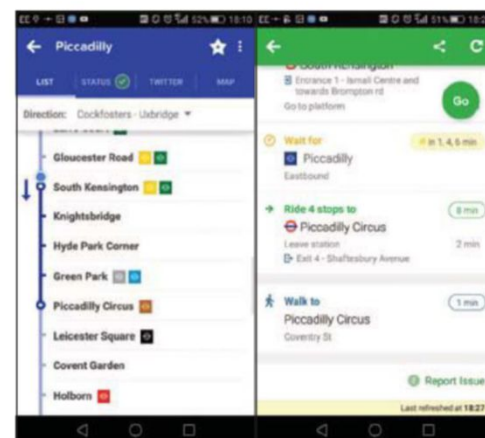
Off I went again and there was a brilliant surprise waiting for me in the tunnel leading to South Kensington Tube Station. Thomas and I had crossed paths. As I was going to Piccadilly Tube Station, Thomas hadn't even made it to the Natural History Museum. I was faster and, more importantly, leading the race.

The fact I had to cram into a tube with





dozens of other people wasn't enough to dampen my spirits. I soon arrived at Piccadilly Circus at 18:27, three-minutes slower than CityMapper's predicted journey time. That famous giant LCD screen was there to greet me. There was no sign of Tom. Had I won? I waited patiently. Ten minutes had passed but still no Tom. My watch indicated 18:47 when I finally saw his blonde mop coming out of the tube station. I had won the race by twenty-minutes. A fantastic victory for both myself and CityMapper. The app I rely on each day to get me to work and locate my friends hadn't let me down. Well done, CityMapper. You did me



## Google Maps

### Tom's Journey

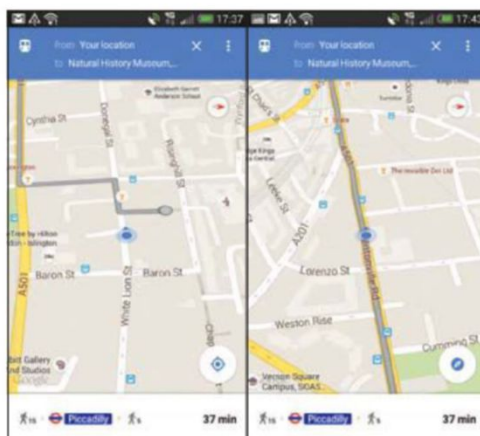
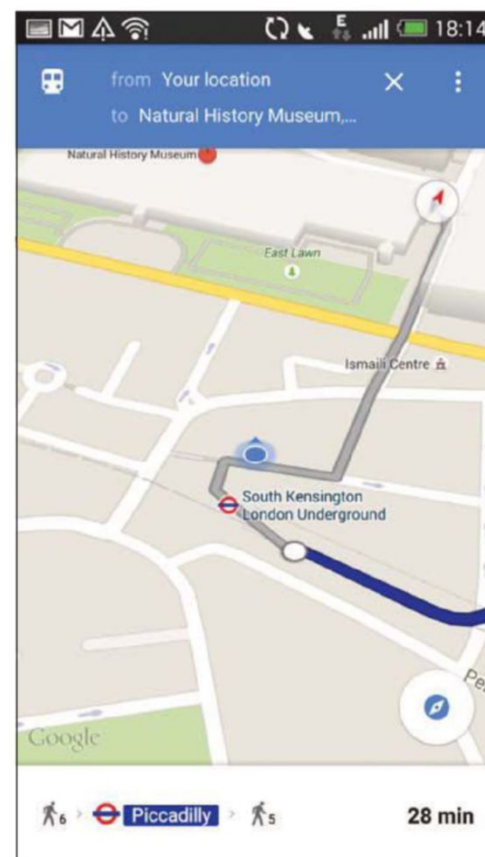
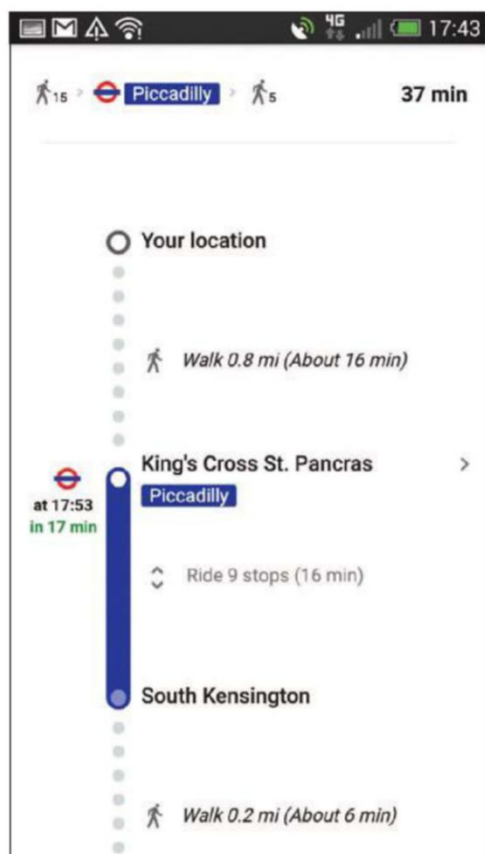
My side of the story wasn't exactly a proud moment. I agreed to test Google Maps, the service used by millions every day to plan their journeys. When Alex said go, I immediately went into the app and typed in the directions 'Angel to National History Museum'. The process was quick and it started calculating the result of the journey. Feeling quite confident with my choice in applications, I got a head



start and began to walk away a little smug. It showed the usual list of options – walking, transport or car. I cycled through the options and unsurprisingly concluded that transport would be the fastest option. With an estimated time of 36 minutes, the app said I needed to get to King's Cross. That would've been fine if it didn't suggest that I walk all the way there. Confused as to why it didn't suggest me to take the Northern Line from Angel station, I reluctantly did as the application suggested.

### CROSS TALK

Walking to King's Cross was fairly straightforward, taking roughly 15 minutes to arrive. Being that the application doesn't seem to account for the huge underground tunnels,



King's Cross was a poor option. Navigating to the underground platform took a further 5-10 minutes; by this point I was beginning to feel pretty worried about my chances of winning. After reaching the tube platform, things got



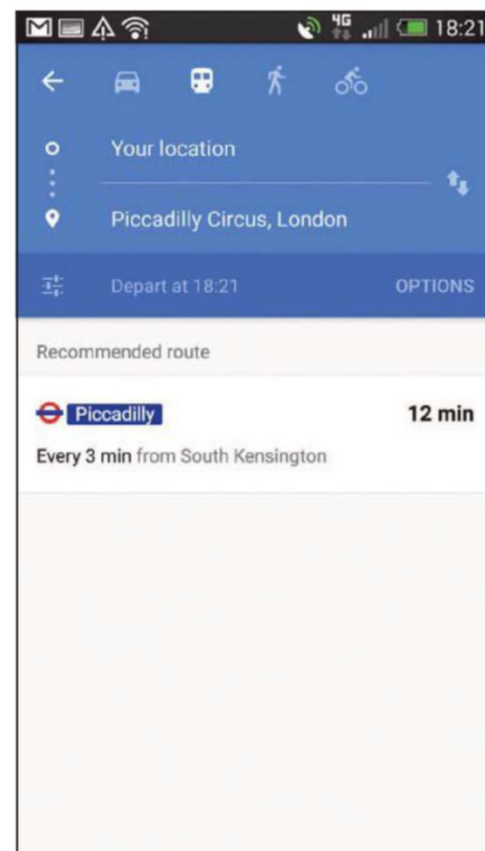
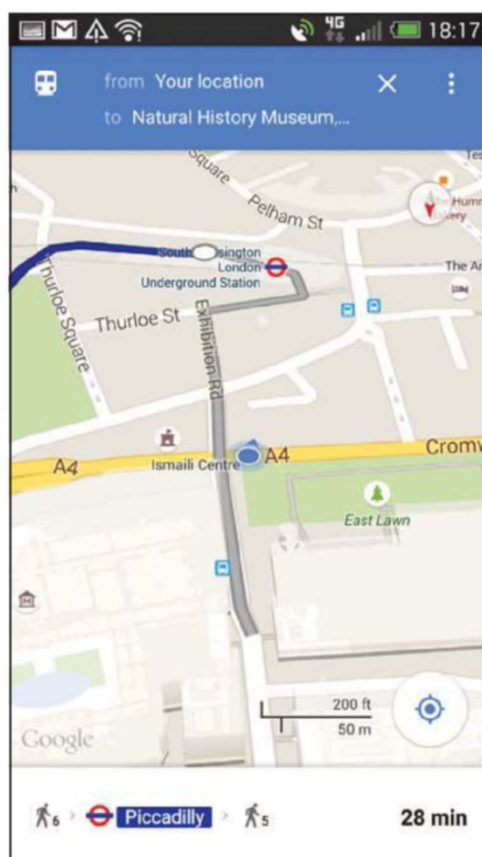


even worse. The app had inadvertently directed me straight into the after-work peak-time crowds. It was horrific. After battling for a further 5 minutes to get on a tube train, I squeezed into a boiling carriage of commuters like a mangled Tetris piece. With 8 stops to make before I reached my destination, I was on it for the long haul.

A further 15 minutes passed before I reached South Kensington station. I jumped off the tube and frantically adjusted to my surroundings. Anyone who has been to South Kensington will know that it has a very long tunnel leading to Exhibition Road. Well, it just so happens I've never been to South Kensington before. Without any warning from Google, I was subjected to another unwanted addition to my journey that added 10 more minutes onto my overall time. To rub salt into the wound Alex passed me. Going the other way.

## DOOMED

At this point, I knew I was pretty much doomed. I reached the museum and took a photo confirming that I had arrived, then quickly inputted the directions to Piccadilly Circus. The application did as expected, telling me to



backtrack towards South Kensington Station and jump on the Piccadilly Line. I did as it commanded. Then things got even worse.

South Kensington was as busy as Kings Cross. I weaved through the crowd to reach the train.

I reached the train after several minutes crushed like a sardine in a tin. With three stops separating me from Piccadilly Circus and 55 minutes gone, I was certain Google Maps had failed.

At Piccadilly Circus, there are various exits. It's a guessing game for tourists. Luckily, I knew the correct exit. Walking out of the station, I was confronted with Alex looking rather bored.

He smiled before delivering the bad news. Google Maps had lost by 20 minutes.

## CONCLUSION

With CityMapper the clear winner, it paints an odd result that perhaps would've been different at other times of the day. The journey Alex took was several minutes faster on paper, yet his ability to dodge the busy lines and commuter stations gave him an edge in practice. Unfortunately, neither app has the ability to tell you that your destination will be crammed full of people - that is simply a matter of common sense. Since they had to adhere to the suggested routes very strictly, there was nothing Tom could do but suck it up and admit defeat. Equally, their inability to map the interior of tube stations means that you need to figure

things out for yourself, something Tom struggled with in South Kensington and that unexpectedly long tunnel.

A few tips for both applications going forward would be to introduce offline interior views for tube stations and have some contextual awareness with regards to peak hours and busy stations. This would ensure more accurate time estimations when travelling and could potentially change the routes which the app suggests. CityMappers choice of avoiding busy stations must mean it has some awareness of peak hours, whereas Google's application threw Tom in the lion's den and then said the journey should be the quickest. I'm sorry but this is complete misinformation. Excuse the pun but Google Maps has a bit of catching up to do.



The Beatles had Abbey Road. You've got an iPhone or iPad. Tom Wellburn reviews the top iOS apps to help you create and record quality tracks. A one, a-two, a-one two three four.

**T**ablets and Smartphones have evolved to offer much more than just conversations and Jamster ringtones. Modern mobile devices are essentially micro-PCs with all the components you would find in a traditional desktop. As such, it's become fairly easy to port certain programs across into app stores and retain an almost

#### desktop-like experience.

Unsurprisingly, audio production on mobile technology is an area that seen a rise in popularity these last few years. With more emphasis on 'live sets' where producers are encouraged to use real equipment on stage, iPads have become a dominant force within a musicians arsenal. This led me to wonder just how viable these devices can be in

a 'professional' setting. Can we actually use an iPad to produce a track which has a professional result? Is there more use to them than gimmicky DJing on-stage? Let's find out.

#### THE SOFTWARE

In order to decide whether the iPads will work in a pro setting, we first need to take a look at the various software on offer. If you're

looking to get into portable music production on a tablet, you'll quickly realise that Apple is the only way to go. While the Google Play Store has some music-based applications on there, it's nowhere near the amount that Apple has. I scoured the store for software from reputable companies within the audio production field. Below is a quick run-down of the top 8 that I could find:

#### Propellerhead Thor (iPad)

If you've ever used Reason, you'll be familiar with Thor. Those of you expecting the mobile version to be stripped down would be wrong, as this is an exact remake of its desktop counterpart. With the same sound engine and basic functionality, you get a choice of 6 wavetypes, 3 filters, 3 envelopes and two LFO's. This gives plenty of scope for sound design. There's also a routing screen that allows you to create signal chains between different parts of the circuitry, as well as a 16 step-sequencer for creating crazy arpeggios and gated loops.





phone.  
service

centre 

If, like Charlie, you have splashed out on a brand spanking new mobile phone and promptly dropped it in the street where it was run over by a passing mobility scooter, don't despair. Just follow these **5 easy steps** to mobile salvation...



**01**

**Stop crying.**

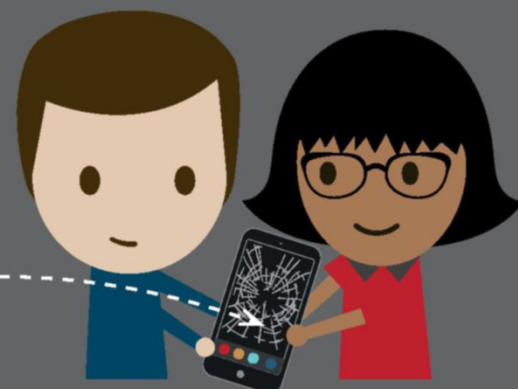
It's OK. Really. These things happen and can easily be fixed...



**02**

**Head for the  
Phone Service Centre.**

Check online at  
[phoneservicecentre.co.uk](http://phoneservicecentre.co.uk) for details.



**03**

**Hand over the phone...**

Just pass it over to one of our expert technicians who will assess the damage.



**05**

**Take back your shiny  
repaired phone**

and resume your digital life...



**04**

**Relax**

Sit down, relax, have a cup of coffee and enjoy the peace and quiet for 40 minutes whilst your screen is fixed.

**Visit our London store:** 68 Welbeck Street W1G 0AS **Nearest tubes:** Bond St or Oxford Circus

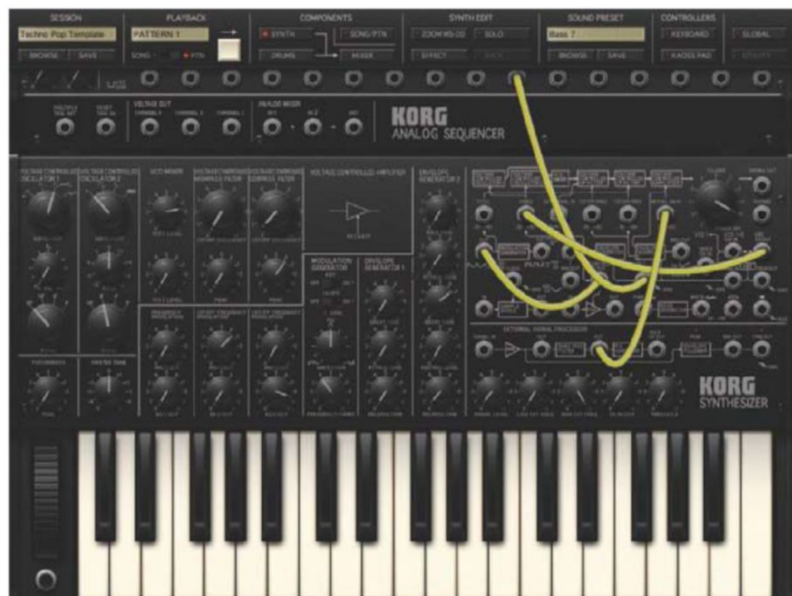
New Stores are popping up all the time, please check our website for further details [phoneservicecentre.co.uk](http://phoneservicecentre.co.uk)

If you'd like to join our franchise please get in touch on [franchise@phoneservicecentre.co.uk](mailto:franchise@phoneservicecentre.co.uk)

or call us on **0333 999 7927**

## Moog Animooog (iPhone and iPad)

Legendary synth developer Moog has always tried to be innovative and think outside the box. Their first ever iPad synth Animooog is a direct example of this. Playing to the strengths of a touchscreen interface, the app allows you to layer 8 wavetypes across an 8x16 grid and then dynamically morph between them. All the waves are real-world samples taken directly from Moog gear, so they somewhat retain that pure analogue feel. You also get 3 envelope generators and an LFO for further sonic sculpting, plus a very good emulation the iconic Moog filter.



## Korg iMS-20 (iPad)

The Korg iMs-20 is an absolute monster, acting as an all-in-one production hub for all your needs. Combining a faithful recreation of the classic MS 20 with a 6-part drum machine, it really is the full package for mobile producers. You get 2 oscillators with three main waveforms plus pulse-width, 2 envelope generators, LFO modulation and the classic MS 20 filter. The UI looks exactly as the MS 20 you remember and even includes the patch bay for routing the signal in creative ways. The drum machine is fantastic, offering a Roland TR style interface with 16 steps for each sound. Simply light them up and get producing!



## Waldorf Nave (iPad)

Waldorf has created a monster with the Nave. As an analogue/digital hybrid synthesiser, it has the best of both worlds. Cramming five pages of sonic possibilities, the synth has a pretty steep learning curve for beginners. You essentially get three oscillators, one of which is analogue and the other two being digital. The digital section allows some extensive editing capabilities such as the importing of custom audio samples and even the ability to create vocal waves from text. The analogue section complements it perfectly, sitting underneath and adding just enough weight to stop it sounding cold and sterile.







## Akai iMPC Pro (iPhone and iPad)

iMPC Pro is the follow-up to Akai's popular iMPC drum synthesiser. It adds a number of new features that differentiate it from the original five dollar app. With a 4x4 grid and mini-screen, you'll be feeling perfectly at home with the MPC-style aesthetics. You now have the ability to create full songs and perform them on the fly thanks to pattern assignment. It comes with 1400+ built-in sounds, encompassing everything from drum sounds to incidental one-shots and effects. You can also import your own sounds and directly record samples through the mic input.



## Steinberg Cubasis (iPad)

As one of the major desktop DAW developers, it was only a matter of time before Steinberg tried their hands at a mobile audio workstation. Cubasis attempts to capture the basics of what makes Cubase so great, offering a stripped back experience that offers a full mixer panel and allows recording/ editing of audio tracks. MIDI parts are edited on a familiar piano roll, where you can take advantage of all the quantizing and transpose features. The app also comes with roughly 70 sampled instruments straight from the HALion Sonic library, as well as 300 audio loops. As of version 1.1, it also offers support for Audiobus.



## Apple GarageBand (iPad)

GarageBand is Apple's cheaper DAW variant that sits below the more advanced production suite named Logic. The iPad version feels fairly deep, offering support for 32 tracks of audio on a familiar sequencer interface. You get 11 instruments comprising guitars, keyboards and strings. Each of these is divided into further sub-categories, meaning there is plenty to get stuck into. One of the highlights of GarageBand is Inter-App audio, which allows you to record sounds from other instrument apps. While it sounds great on paper, it's pretty hard to do and poorly supported. Thankfully, Audiobus support means you have other options.



## Image-Line FL Studio Mobile HD (iPhone and iPad)

FL Studio has been a popular entry-level DAW for years, offering advanced features and a fool-proof interface that anyone can use. The mobile version looks quite similar to Garageband, with an instrument timeline and that standard sequencer look. Still, it manages to carry over the awesome loop-based interface that everybody loves in the desktop equivalent. Making drum loops is as simple as lighting up the dots, meaning you can have a full track going in minutes. Songs are constructed using preset patches and sounds; there's no option for creating your own but you can record. The piano roll is equally simple, allowing easy editing of notes and modulation.



## PRODUCTION JARGON BUSTER

**MIDI:** Musical Instrument Digital Interface (MIDI) is a technical standard developed to allow communication between a wide variety of electronic instruments and computers. You will find MIDI ports on most professional equipment.

**DAW:** Digital Audio Workstation (DAW) refers to an electronic device or computer software that can be used for recording and editing audio files. Examples are Cubase, Logic and Pro Tools.

**Frequency:** All sounds are made up of elements that our ears perceive in different ways. A frequency is a measurement of pitch that we use to define sounds within the field of human hearing. The hiss of a cymbal would represent a high frequency sound, whereas the thud of a bass drum would represent a low frequency tone.

**Wave:** A basic sound generated by an electrical signal. The shape of the wave determines the tone of the sound. Square and small 'S' waves are more aggressive, while triangle and sine tend to sound smoother.

**Oscillator:** A device that generates a wave/waveform. The oscillator provides the desired electric current to create your wave of choice.

**Envelope:** An envelope controls the change in intensity of a sound. With an envelope, you can make the sound linger after a key is pressed or you can make it sharp and punchy.

**Modulation:** Manipulating the sound in a way that changes the resulting tone.

**Filter:** A filter is a device that sits somewhere in a signal chain and alters the incoming sound. There are various filters available:

- **Lowpass:** Cuts the high frequencies of a signal.
- **Highpass:** Cuts the low frequencies of a signal.
- **Bandpass:** Cuts all frequencies around the chosen range.
- **Notch/Bandreject:** Cuts frequencies only in the chosen range.
- **Formant:** Uses a combination of bandpass and notch filters to create vowel sounds similar to human speech.

## RECORDING SETUP

In order to set up your studio for mobile production, a few things will be necessary. If you're using the iPad in a live environment, you'll need multiple devices to construct a track. If you just want to replace your desktop workstation, you should be able to suffice with one or two.

If you have Audiobus, it's possible to designate up to three applications as an audio source and record them in a compatible DAW such as Cubasis. This means you won't need handfuls of iPads. If you prefer a hands-on approach, you can use one for sequencing/recording and the other for software synthesisers and the like.

You'll also need some form of interface to record sounds into your chosen sequencing device. While it's perfectly acceptable to record sound directly from an iPad's mic input, a dedicated audio interface will provide some additional gain to help boost the sound and lower the noise floor. It also gives you the advantage of an XLR connector, which is invaluable in situation where you want to record vocals or live instruments. There's plenty of options available but it's not necessary to go ridiculously expensive. Only one input is needed, so something like the Tascam iXZ will do the trick just fine.

A MIDI keyboard will also be a sound investment

so that you can play each element on a set of physical keys. Again, it doesn't need to be anything expensive. Something small and portable like the M-Audio Keystation Mini 32 should be enough. It's important to bear in mind that you will need the Apple iPad Camera Connection Kit to utilise one of these external peripherals, as MIDI keyboards need a USB connection to function.

Once you've got all these peripherals, setup is fairly simple. Connect the audio interface to your main iPad which will function as your DAW. Plug the second iPad into the interface to record any synthesisers you want to use. The MIDI keyboard will also plug into the second device.





For monitoring audio, any pair of half decent headphones will do, though you will need a Y-splitter cable to hear both devices. I recommend the Sony MDR7506 as an inexpensive pair of cans that should offer somewhat natural sound reproduction.

## IN PRACTICE

Using Audiobus it is possible to get away with a single iPad and produce an entire track, though the setup process is very fiddly. As most synthesisers don't currently support the application, it was easier to use a multi-setup approach. With two iPads in hand, I created loops on one device and then recorded them directly onto the second.

The Recording process was a little fiddly for some synthesisers, especially ones which lack a dedicated loop record function. Rather than simply playing back my best take and recording it across, my only option was to perform the melodies live and record them in one long stream, bad takes and all. Not being the most skilled keyboard player, it worked but was hardly elegant.

The included effects within each of the DAWs are fairly decent in features, meaning that it was possible to edit the sounds to reasonable quality. Essentials like Reverb, EQ and compression are all there, giving you plenty of opportunity to mix your sounds. I found myself editing them a little on the recording iPad, before recording them across and

having a second go within the DAW. It all came across very natural, much like a producer would do on a desktop. Typically, I tweak my sounds within the synthesiser before adding extra effects to further sculpt it. While none of the mobile DAWs had a 'true' mixer section, it was still possible to do basic editing and add individual effects to tracks. Cubasis came the closest, offering an experience that felt somewhat comparable to its desktop counterpart. It has a mixer, though it was very barebones with very little routing capabilities.

After a few rounds of firing out loops on iMPC and recording them into my chosen DAW, I got used to the touch-enabled setup.

Workflow definitely feels faster, though I'm not sure how it translates across in reality.

Multi-touch capabilities means that you can grab multiple faders at once and enjoy some great hands-on modulation. I could buy a controller interface with various knobs, but it would not give the visual feedback that a touch-enabled device provides. Watching the faders move

underneath your finger gave a weird response that felt intuitive and more natural than staring at physical buttons. In half an hour, I had a half-decent track playing.

## CONCLUSION

Can an iPad replace a pro setup? Not yet, but there is huge potential. It's really the production front that lets it down. Many features are absent, so it feels a little harder than it should to churn things out. Synthesisers you can buy are excellent, with nothing separating them from the ones you can get on a desktop. Sound quality is easily comparable to desktop counterparts which incidentally cost much more for the same thing.

The main thing is the touch interface feels fantastic. I really didn't think it would captivate me as much as it did. There is real possibility that, if developers provide a proper workstation. Give me a proper mobile DAW and an iPad that I can plug a proper USB audio interface into.

If they manage to pull it off, I'm sold.

# Having a real brawl

This month's reviews concentrate on mayhem and maiming - all in the best possible taste of course!

Reviewer: Thomas Wellburn – for full reviews, check out [WhatMobile.net](http://WhatMobile.net)

## Marvel Future Fight

Free (Android and iOS)

A dungeon brawler at heart, Marvel Future Fight is a celebration of everything that makes comic books great. With almost 40 characters to unlock including all your favourites, there's plenty to get your teeth stuck into. A nasty group of people are trying to destroy the universe, meaning Marvel heroes and villains must unite to save humanity. Initially, you only have a team of three characters. Extra allies must be recruited by collecting Biometric tanks. Each character can also undergo a series of upgrades to enhance their abilities, introducing some welcome RPG elements to the game.



## Bears Vs. Art

Free (Android and iOS)

Bears vs. Art is the perfect puzzler for short commutes. Each level is set within a room in a museum and Rory the bear must destroy each painting. Choosing a direction causes Rory to run forward until something stops him in his path. Retracting spikes, one way arrows, laser beams and teleports all accumulate in later levels to create some very difficult labyrinths.



## Lara Croft: Relic Run

Free (Android, iOS and Windows Phone)

Lara Croft: Relic Run combines Temple Run gameplay with classic Tomb Raider mechanics. Run, swing, drive, and swan dive through a multitude of locations including ancient temples and desert ruins. Levels can be traversed in various ways, including ATV and motorcycle sections. Choose between multiple routes on your journey and collect power-ups that give Lara extra skills.



## Kung Fury: Street Rage

Free (Android, iOS)

Kung Fury recreates the cheesy 80's vibe in spectacular fashion. You have a button for attacking left and another to attack right. This simplicity makes it addictive. Enemies come in hordes and you need to time your button taps for a perfect strike. Throw in teleporting enemies that can switch sides in a flash and you have a surprisingly challenging game.





## Terminator Genisys: Revolution

Free (Android, iOS)

Coinciding with the release of the film, Terminator Genisys hits mobile platforms with a bang. Bringing third person combat set in the year 2028, you play as John Connor who is battling to escape a Skynet prison camp. Completing levels nets you experience points and currency which can then be spent on upgrading or purchasing new weapons.



## Final Fantasy: Record Keeper

Free (Android, iOS)

As a novice record keeper in charge of all the Final Fantasy history, you discover an evil presence corrupting certain paintings which document the past. It's your task to venture inside these paintings and relive those moments, all in glorious 8bit fashion with those classic real-time battle sequences.



## Fallout Shelter

Free (iOS)

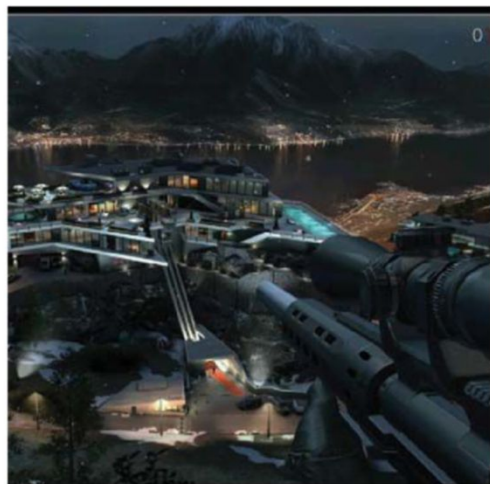
Based on the popular post-apocalyptic gaming franchise, Fallout Shelter places you in control of an Overseer who must run their very own underground vault. You must keep inhabitants happy by meeting certain criteria. Each person can be assigned a role, such as foraging for supplies outside. You can unlock additional rooms as the game progresses, providing new functions for the vault.



## Hitman: Sniper

£3.99 (Android, iOS)

Hitman Sniper is a shooter with a puzzle. You are tasked with eliminating targets. Some levels you'll be targeting an individual, other times there will be multiple. The key is to remain undetected.. Later missions become difficult, introducing domino kill elements where you need to score double headshots and even dispose of bodies.



## Angry Birds Fight!

Free (iOS)

Angry Birds Fight! is a free-to-play puzzler set in the Angry Birds universe.. The game combines classic puzzle elements with pre-scripted battle sequences. Each game lasts 30 seconds. The idea is to match as many birds as you can in order to increase your attack and defence stats. A battle sequence outcome is calculated based on previous performance.



## Heroes Path

£2.99 (iOS)

The latest Star Wars games to hit mobile platforms, Heroes Path takes place during the events of Episode IV: A New Hope. The game is a board-game puzzle title, requiring the player to move characters around a grid and reach the exit. Every location in the original Star Wars film is included. You'll encounter various enemies to be avoided, such as the Stormtroopers and Tusken Raiders.



# The dish of the day

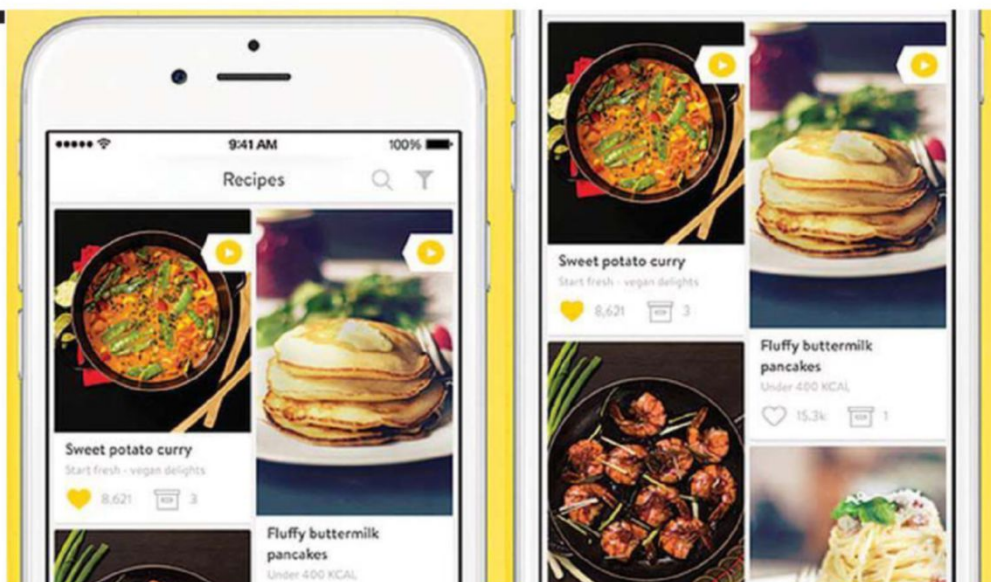
The latest iOS and Android apps reveal some useful aids for travellers and healths nuts alike

Reviewer: Alex Yau – for full reviews, check out [WhatMobile.net](http://WhatMobile.net)

## Kitchen Stories

Free (iOS and Android)

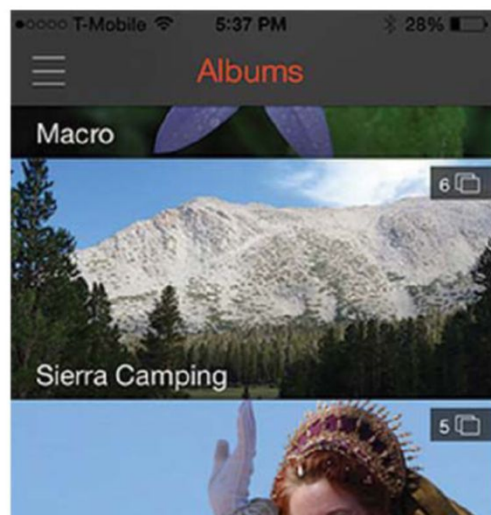
Kitchen Stories helps amateur and seasoned chefs alike find the inspiration to create delicious dishes. All recipes are accompanied by pictures, step-by-step photo instructions and how-to videos to ensure they're easy to make. You can even add automatically generated shopping lists to plan meals on the go. Each delicious recipe is grouped under different categories, including 'All-time classics,' 'Pasta variations,' '20-minute dishes' and much more. This means there's always a dish to suit whatever different tastes or busy time schedule that you may have.



## Eyefi Mobi

Free (iOS and Android)

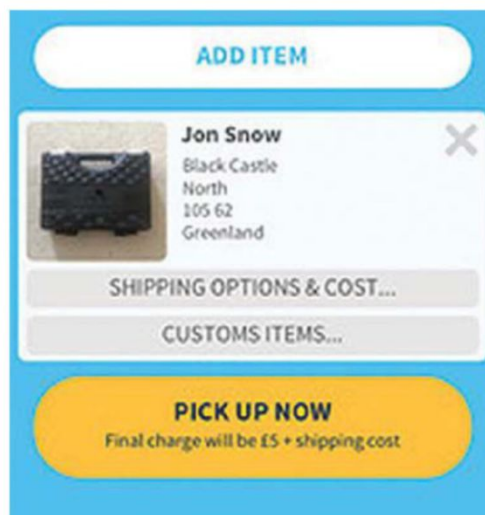
Eyefi makes organising photos from various devices, whether it's a tablet, smartphone or DSLR, an absolute doddle. Just snap a picture and Eyefi transfers, organises and syncs the photos on each device. You can create albums, edit photographs and tag images for easy location.



## Weengs

Free (iOS and Android)

Weengs takes the hassle out of sending gifts and presents. Photograph the item you want shipping out and they promise a courier will collect it within 15 minutes. They'll even professionally package it for you and distribute it through one of Weeng's partners, including Royal Mail, Parcel Force and UPS.



## The Weather Channel

Free (iOS and Android)

The Weather Channel will use weather reports submitted by people in the area to enhance its forecasts. Severe weather alerts, hurricane tracking and UV index are just some of the many of the notifications it offers.

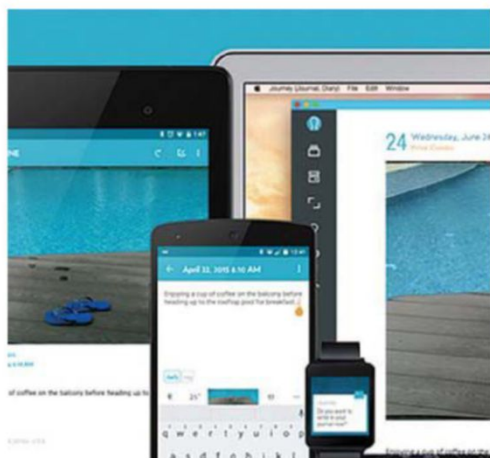




## Journey

Free (Android)

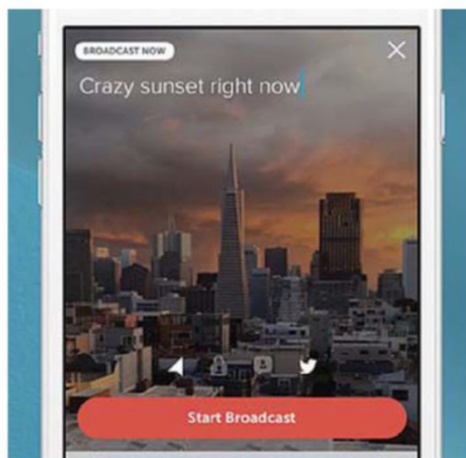
Journey captures your everyday thoughts, logs and other diary entries into an attractive and easy-to-use interface. A calendar, photo and atlas view makes it easy to revisit any moment of your life and you can decorate them with photos and videos. You can sync your entries across various devices and even share them across social media for all your friends to see.



## Periscope

Free (iOS and Android)

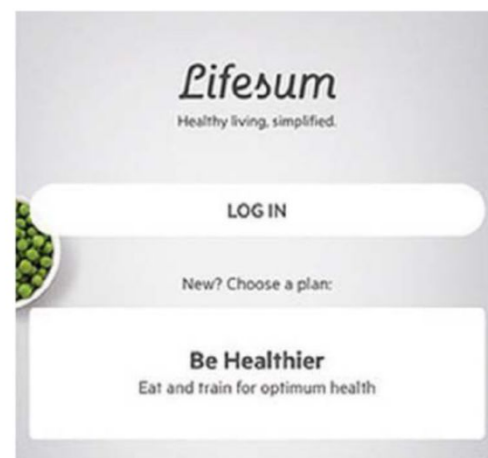
Twitter's latest live streaming app is now available for both iOS and Android users. You can view other users' live streams and either like or comment on what they're doing. Your own activities, whether it's snowboarding or sitting down for breakfast, can also be streamed for the world to see.



## Lifesum

Free (iOS and Android)

Healthy eating and regular exercise can be hard to maintain when you don't have a solid plan in place. Lifesum makes this easy by helping you achieve your health and fitness goals through small, easy steps. You'll get friendly reminders about your diet and tips on how to improve your exercise regime.



## Zova

Free (iOS and Android)

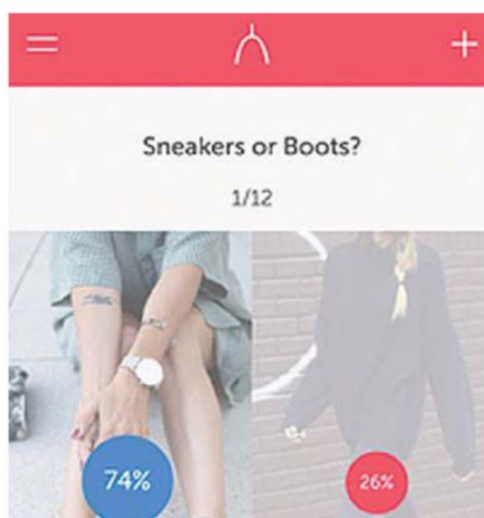
Zova is a fitness motivator app packed with over 100 workouts, including cardio, interval training or strength exercises, to keep you in shape. Each exercise ranges from a short-three minute burst to longer 45-minute sessions, so there's always an exercise to fit into your busy schedule.



## Wishbone

Free (iOS and Android)

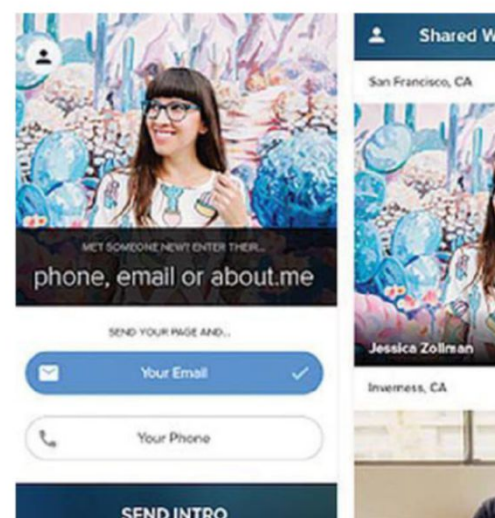
Each morning, Wishbone will send you 12 questions based on current affairs and pop culture. You get two answers to pick from you get to see what the most popular choice is. It's a fun way to start each morning and get a head start on fashion, celebrity, music, current affairs or other relevant news.



## Intro

Free (Android)

Business cards can be fiddly sometimes. You have to search around your pockets for one and ensure you're stocked up. Intro keeps you in touch with contacts through digital business cards. You control the information displayed and even keep in touch with the people you've exchanged details with.



# Nintendo 3DS

It's been a while but Xenoblade Chronicles 3D has finally made it to 3DS and it was worth the wait

Reviewer: Thomas Wellburn – for full reviews, check out [WhatMobile.net](http://WhatMobile.net)



## Story Of Seasons

In a bizarre complication surrounding copyrights and ownership, Harvest Moon as we know it is no more. Although the game has always been developed by Marvelous Entertainment, Natsume own the trademark to the name and hence this new title needed something fresh. Story of Seasons fits the bill perfectly, describing in three words exactly how the farming simulator franchise managed to captivate everyone's hearts all these years.

Game mechanics follow the standard Harvest Moon formula that you'll all remember, requiring you to complete a list of simple chores that gradually progress as your farm expands. When you first arrive in town there's actually precious little to do, so that's your opportunity

to network and attract fresh business. As the game progresses, the amount of crop farming, irrigation and animal care-taking soon begins to overwhelm your day.

With a finite stamina bar that never seems quite enough for what you need to complete, each day becomes a frantic race against time to finish as many tasks as possible. When your stamina hits zero, you'll spend the remainder of the day socialising with neighbours, trading items at the market or recovering your precious energy in bed. Funnily enough, there's nothing more satisfying than selling an influx of grain so you can buy that additional plot of land and expand your farm further. Of course, this barely brushes the surface of this expansive



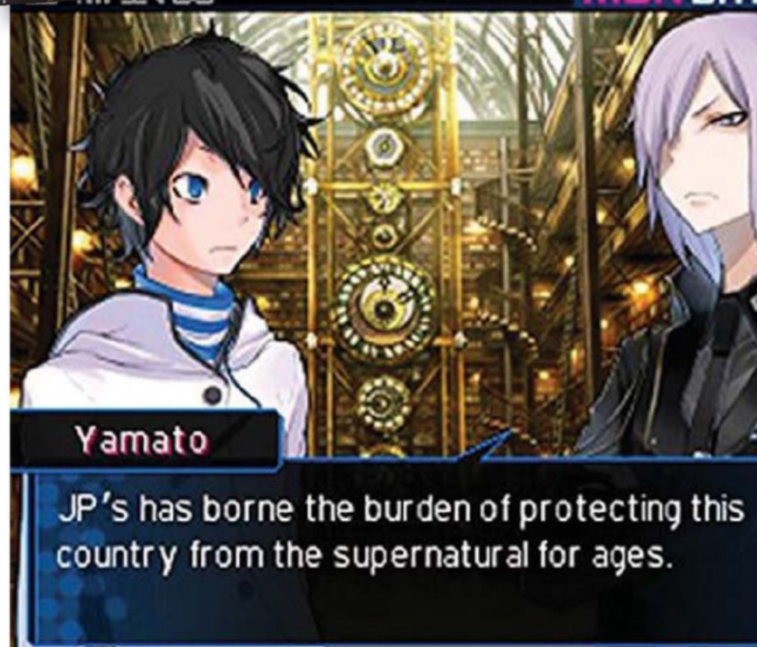
## Shin Megami Tensei: Devil Survivor 2: Record Breaker

Another JRPG that will sap away precious hours of your life, Devil Survivor 2: Record Breaker is a fantastic role-playing-game with a strategic twist. Releasing on the Nintendo DS way back in 2012, it was sadly overshadowed by the launch of the newer 3DS. Rather than creating a rushed port, the development team bided their time and waited over 3 years to release a version for the new handheld. Finally, we have a definitive version of Devil Survivor 2 that not only improves the graphics but brings forth tons of enhancements to an already great game.

The story is fairly simple on the surface. A group of mysterious cosmic invaders known as the Septentriones arrive in Japan and begin attacking the country. As a final attempt to thwart their eradication of humanity,

the main characters all sign pacts with the devil to become The Thirteen Devil Messengers. When you first boot the game, you have a choice of two scenarios. Septentriones is essentially the original game, with a visual update. It's a great untouched homage for players who want to get all nostalgic and enjoy it in the purest form. The second scenario Triangulum, picks up at the end of the original game and depicts a world that has been heavily transformed by a fresh set of cosmic invaders.

Players move characters around a grid-based map, using each turn to carefully position themselves for an impending battle. Exploiting enemy weaknesses gifts you extra turns to outmanoeuvre your foes, meaning the game becomes a complex game of 3d chess. If you want a thinking mans





# PlayStation Vita

Two fast action games to bring a breath of fresh air to your library of essential Vita hits

Reviewer: Thomas Wellburn – for full reviews, check out [WhatMobile.net](http://WhatMobile.net)

## J-Stars Victory VS+

If you were lucky enough to import a copy of the original J-Stars, you'll know just how fun this fighting game can be. A cross between Smash Brothers and Marvel Vs. Capcom, J-Stars brings incredibly fast-paced action and some stunning eye candy. J-Stars Victory VS+ is the western variant of the same game, with the added addition of an Arcade mode to pad out an already bursting roster. With over 52 characters to choose from, you'll be treated to one of the largest selections of people on any fighting game currently available.

Putting Goku against Ace from One Piece never gets old and you'll be conjuring up your own dream manga duels for months to come. It

captures the feel of each of its 23 included series perfectly and will make diehard anime fans cry with glee. The game lets up to four players battle it out in a variety of arenas inspired by each series. Each arena can be traversed in full 3D, allowing you to use parts of the environment as potential weapons. Characters don't 'die' in J-Stars and can be revived after a predetermined set of time passes.

To win a battle, the player must fill up all three sections of the WIN gauge at the top of the screen. What ensues is a frantic scrap for victory as each player desperately tries to eliminate each player before the other can revive. Using Ultimate Attacks is the best way to eliminate an opponent,







## Operation Abyss: New Tokyo

If you enjoy your Japanese Role-Playing-Games, you'll definitely want to look into Operation Abyss: New Tokyo Legacy. The storyline is suitably wacky and puts you in control of a character who has recently been inducted into Code Physics, a government-funded agency responsible for taking down evil creatures known as the 'Variants'. After initially waking up to multiple severed bodies with no indication of what exactly happened, it soon becomes clear that these monsters are the cause of all the havoc throughout the city. What quickly ensues is an endless dungeon crawler with over 40 hours of gameplay and lots of grinding.

One of the unique features surrounding Operation Abyss: New Tokyo is the inclusion of randomly generated characters within the story. It creates an element of disjointedness between the player and the ensuing

narrative because it's difficult to become emotionally engaged but it also adds some longevity and unpredictability to the gameplay. It's a double-edged sword that sometimes works really well, others times fails miserably. Gameplay is exactly what you expect from a dungeon crawler, with masses of menus and statistics which can be infinitely tweaked to create your perfect team.

It's a slow burner to begin with and the initial 5 or so hours could turn-off the impatient players amongst us. The dungeons all start to become somewhat bland and it all begins to feel like an endless loop of killing Variants to further the story. If you persevere, you'll be treated to some incredible enemies and fantastic 2D visual art. This is a classic dungeon crawler through and through where it pays to be patient.



# WHAT MOBILE

## BUYER'S GUIDE

Buying a new device can be a difficult decision. Our comprehensive buyer's guide is here to help you.



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**55** Phone reviews

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**94** Wearables reviews





## Acer Liquid E2

**Reviewed:** January 2014, price: £189.99  
<http://www.acer.co.uk>

Stacked up against recent entries in the budget market, the Acer Liquid E2 is simply outdated. It's a functional Android handset but the clunky, thick design makes it feel like you're holding a toy and the software doesn't have any standout features. Acer will have to seriously raise its game if it's to be a contender in the phone market.

**OS** Android 4.2 Jelly Bean  
**Processor** Quad-core 1.2 GHz  
**Screen** 4.5 inches  
**Resolution** 540 x 960 pixels  
**Memory** 1GB RAM  
**Storage** 4GB  
**MicroSD compatible?** Yes  
**Camera** 8 MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing  
**Video** 1080p  
**Connectivity** 3G  
**Dimensions** 131 x 68 x 9.9mm  
**Weight** 140g  
**Battery** 2000 mAh

**VERDICT:** A dated, bulky phone saved by its reasonable price.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★



## Acer Liquid Jade

**Reviewed:** April 2015, price: £199  
<http://www.acer.co.uk>

A decent handset from a smaller brand, the Liquid Jade has all the components in place to be a much better handset than it actually is. What holds it back is Acer's lack of polish when compared to bigger brands like Motorola. The end result is a handset that you could settle for, but probably shouldn't.

**OS** Android 4.4 KitKat  
**Processor** 1.3GHz quad-core  
**Screen** 5 inches  
**Resolution** 720 x 1,280 pixels  
**Memory** 1GB RAM  
**Storage** 8GB/16GB  
**MicroSD compatible?** No  
**Camera** 13MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing  
**Video** 1080p  
**Connectivity** 3G  
**Dimensions** 140.5 x 69 x 7.5mm  
**Weight** 110g  
**Battery** 2,100mAh

**VERDICT:** A decent low-end handset, but there are too many better alternatives.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★



## Alcatel One Touch Pop S3

**Reviewed:** September 2014, price: £80  
[www.alcatelonetouch.com/uk](http://www.alcatelonetouch.com/uk)

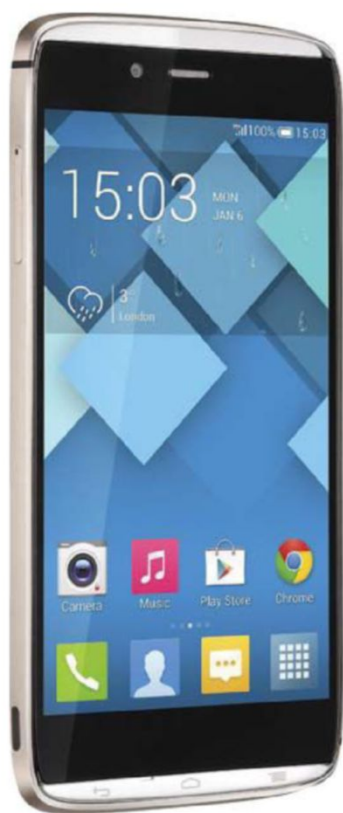
The Alcatel One Touch POP S3 has its merits, especially taking into account the sub-£100 price of the device. The problem here is that by making room for 4G capability Alcatel has been forced to make cutbacks in crucial areas. However, if you are simply after the option to access faster web browsing and app speeds on the go, then the POP S3 offers you that at the cheapest price possible.

**OS** Android 4.3 Jelly Bean  
**Processor** 1.2GHz quad-core  
**Screen** 4 inches  
**Resolution** 480 x 800 pixels  
**Memory** 1GB RAM  
**Storage** 4GB  
**Micro SD compatible?** Yes  
**Camera** 5MP rear-facing, VGA front-facing  
**Video** 1080p  
**Connectivity** 4G  
**Dimensions** 123 x 64.4 x 9.9mm  
**Weight** 130g  
**Battery** 2,000mAh

**VERDICT:** Cheap, sure, but its poor quality renders its 4G capability near pointless.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★





## Alcatel One Touch Idol Alpha

**Reviewed:** February 2015, price: £319

[www.alcatelonetouch.com/uk](http://www.alcatelonetouch.com/uk)

While it's good to see manufacturers branching out from the traditional black slab design, the Idol Alpha is a reminder of why the slab works. There are just too many compromises here, and the hardware does not make amends for them. Aside from the fact that Android itself is a powerful operating system that you can tailor to your heart's content, there's very little to redeem this phone.

**OS** Android 4.2 Jelly Bean  
**Processor** 1.2GHz quad-core  
**Screen** 4.7 inches  
**Resolution** 720 x 1280 pixels  
**Memory** 1 GB RAM  
**Storage** 16GB  
**Micro SD compatible?** No  
**Camera** 13MP rear-facing, 1.3MP front-facing  
**Video** 1080p

**Connectivity** 3G  
**Dimensions** 138 x 66.6 x 7.5 mm  
**Weight** 117.4 g  
**Battery** 2,000 mAh

**VERDICT:** A decent camera is the only redeeming feature on this overpriced handset.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★



## Alcatel One Touch Idol X+

**Reviewed:** June 2014, price: £TBC

[www.alcatelonetouch.com/uk](http://www.alcatelonetouch.com/uk)

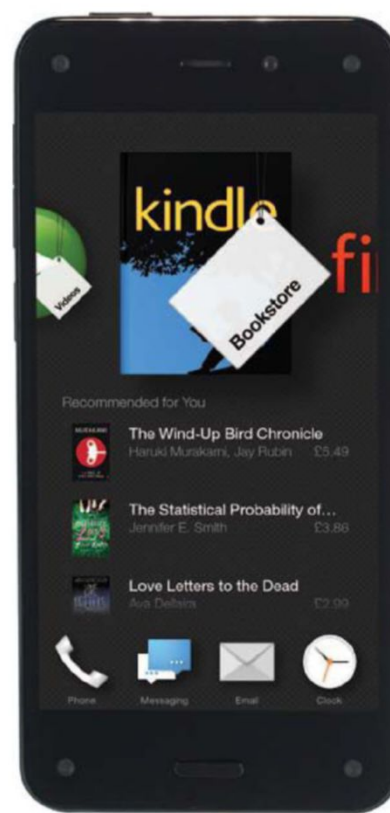
We usually greet lesser-known brands with open arms, but never has one disappointed as much as Alcatel with its One Touch Idol X+. Despite decent specs, it's the handset's flaws that hog the limelight. It's outperformed by other handsets in its price bracket in just about every respect. It's hard to envisage anyone patient enough to waste their time with it.

**OS** Android 4.2 Jelly Bean  
**Processor** Octa-core 2GHz  
**Screen** 5 inches  
**Resolution** 1080 x 1920 pixels  
**Memory** 2GB RAM  
**Storage** 16GB or 32GB  
**MicroSD Compatible?** Yes  
**Camera** 13 MP rear-facing, 2 MP front-facing  
**Video** 1080p

**Connectivity** 3G  
**Dimensions** 140.4 x 69.1 x 7.9mm  
**Weight** 130g  
**Battery** 2,500mAh

**VERDICT:** With such great competition the One Touch Idol X+ simply looks irrelevant.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★



## Amazon Fire Phone

**Reviewed:** December 2014, price: £400

When we first learned of the 3D capabilities of the Amazon Fire Phone we thought it might be a gimmick. Instead, it turned out to be the feature we love the most. Its other interface aspects are riddled with hiccups which can add to some severe usability issues. Its design has some questionable choices, too. It has a lot of potential though, and we're eagerly looking forward to a sequel.

**OS** Android KitKat 4.4  
**Processor** 2.2GHz quad-core  
**Screen** 4.7-inches  
**Resolution** 1,280 x 720 pixels  
**Memory** 2GB  
**Storage** 32GB  
**microSD compatible?** Yes, up to 64GB  
**Camera** 13MP front-facing,

2.1MP rear-facing  
**Video** 1080p  
**Connectivity** 4G  
**Dimensions** 139.2 x 66.5 x 8.9mm  
**Weight** 160g  
**Battery** 2,400mAh

**VERDICT:** A promising yet flawed debut effort, recommendable only to the curious.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★







## Apple iPhone 5c

Reviewed: December 2013, price: £469 (16GB) £549 (32GB)

If you need a splash of colour in your life and you're already a massive fan of the iOS operating system, then the iPhone 5c is much the same as the previous iPhone 5. There's a slightly upgraded front-facing camera and 4G will work on any UK network, but other than that you're getting the exact same thing. The iPhone 5c is simply around for those of you who love great design without breaking the bank.

**OS** iOS 7  
**Processor** Dual-core 1.3GHz  
**Screen** 4 inches  
**Resolution** 640 x 1136 pixels  
**Memory** 1GB RAM  
**Storage** 16/32GB  
**MicroSD Compatible?** No  
**Camera** 8 MP rear-facing, 1.2 MP front-facing  
**Video** 1080

**Connectivity** 4G  
**Size** 12.4 x 59.2 x 9 mm  
**Weight** 132g  
**Battery** 1,510 mAh

**VERDICT:** It's the most colourful iPhone to date, but it's identical to the iPhone 5.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★



## Apple iPhone 5s

Reviewed: December 2013, price: £549 (16GB) £629 (32GB) £709 (64GB)

With fingerprint identity, 64-bit A7 64-bit chip delivers up to twice the performance of the iPhone 4 and 5c, many people will opt to pay the extra £80 or so over the 5c. They'll also get an improved camera with 15 per cent larger sensor and improved low-light capabilities. The True Tone flash incorporates two flashes each matched to different light temperatures so flesh tones are more natural with flash pictures.

**OS** iOS 7  
**Processor** Dual-core 1.3GHz ARM V8  
**Screen** 4 inches  
**Resolution** 1136 x 640 pixels  
**Memory** 1GB RAM  
**Storage** 16GB, 32GB or 64GB  
**MicroSD Compatible?** No  
**Camera** 8 MP rear-facing, 1.2 MP front-facing

**Video** 1080p  
**Connectivity** 4G  
**Dimensions** 123.8 x 58.6 x 7.6mm  
**Weight** 112g  
**Battery** 1,560 mAh

**VERDICT:** The gold standard in user-friendly smartphones, with a ton of power to boot.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★



## Apple iPhone 6

Reviewed: November 2014, price: £539

Calling it 'the best iPhone ever' almost seems a little redundant. Of course it's better - it's more powerful, has a better camera, and NFC could soon become a huge deal. We're not quite as keen on the aesthetics of it versus older iPhone designs, but it's still got a wonderful premium build and a beautifully sharp display. The option for greatly expanded storage sizes shouldn't be undervalued, either.

**OS** iOS8  
**Processor** Apple A8 1.4GHz  
**Screen** 4.7 inches  
**Resolution** 1334 x 750 pixels  
**Memory** 1GB RAM  
**Storage** 16GB/64GB/128GB  
**Micro SD compatible?** No  
**Camera** 8 MP iSight rear-facing, 1.2 MP front-facing  
**Video** 1080p

**Connectivity** 4G  
**Dimensions** 138.1 x 67 x 6.9 mm  
**Weight** 129g  
**Battery** 1,810 mAh

**VERDICT:** Bigger and better than ever, just as you'd expect. The definitive iPhone.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★





## Apple iPhone 6 Plus

Reviewed: November 2014, price: £619

It's the iPhone 6, but bigger. That's the only difference, and it comes with all of the ups and downs that you would expect from a phablet. You'll either love or hate the larger screen which, whilst still beautiful, is slightly less sharp than its little brother's. Similarly it might be tough for smaller hands to hold. But then you do get to see more things on screen at once. It's still a remarkable phone though, make no mistake.

**OS** iOS8  
**Processor** Apple A8 1.4GHz  
**Screen** 5.5 inches  
**Resolution** 1920 x 1080 pixels  
**Memory** 1GB RAM  
**Storage** 16GB/64GB/128GB  
**Micro SD compatible?** No  
**Camera** 8 MP iSight rear-facing, 1.2 MP front-facing  
**Video** 1080p

**Connectivity** 4G  
**Dimensions** 158.1 x 77.8 x 7.1 mm  
**Weight** 172g  
**Battery** 1,810 mAh

**VERDICT:** A bigger iPhone 6 - it's really that simple. Prefer it or not, it's great regardless.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★



## Archos 50 Helium

Reviewed: July 2014, price: £199

archos.com

If the Moto G and Moto E are the gold standard of entry-level and low-cost smartphones, then the 50 Helium is certainly worthy of silver. It's got a nice big screen as well as invaluable 4G capability. It won't set the world alight, but it's a standout in a market awash with cheap, limited handsets.

**OS** Android 4.3 Jelly Bean  
**Processor** 1.2GHz quad-core  
**Screen** 5 inches  
**Resolution** 1280 x 720 pixels  
**Memory** 1GB RAM  
**Storage** 8GB  
**MicroSD compatible?** Yes  
**Camera** 8MP  
**Video** 1080p  
**Connectivity** 4G LTE

**Dimensions** 145 x 71.5 x 8.95mm  
**Weight** 160g  
**Battery** 2,000mAh

**VERDICT:** A capable alternative to the market-leading Moto G.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★



## BlackBerry Classic

Reviewed: April 2015, price: £330

uk.blackberry.com

BlackBerry diehards will love the modern touchscreen and keyboard – and even some actual apps, just like a proper smartphone. There are certainly worse handsets you could be issued at work. But there's nothing here to tempt an iPhone, Android or Windows user. For almost everyone other than BlackBerry fans, this phone is just a reminder of how far we've moved on in recent years.

**OS** BlackBerry OS 10.3.1  
**Processor** Dual-core 1.5GHz  
**Screen** 3.5 inches  
**Resolution** 720 x 720 pixels  
**Memory** 2GB RAM  
**Storage** 16GB  
**MicroSD compatible?** Yes  
**Rear camera** 8MP  
**Front camera** 2MP

**Video** 1080p @ 30fps  
**Connectivity** 4G  
**Dimensions** 131 x 72.4 x 10.2mm  
**Weight** 177g  
**Battery** 2,515mAh

**VERDICT:** Difficult to recommend to all but the most ardent of BlackBerry fans.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★







## BlackBerry Passport

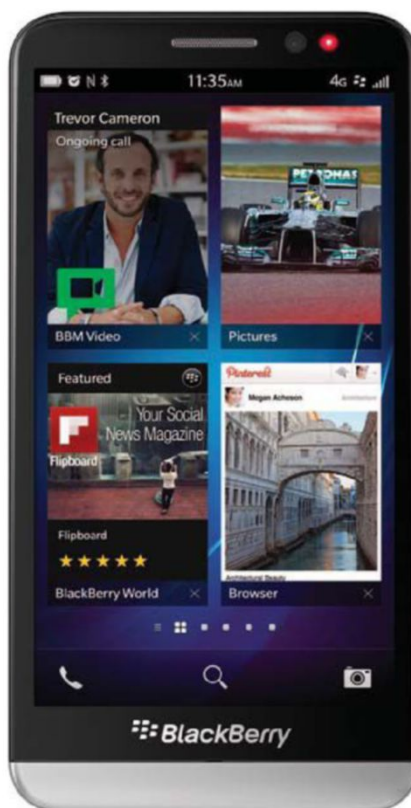
**Reviewed: November 2014, price: £530**  
uk.blackberry.com

A premium device by anyone's standards - if you can look past the thoroughly odd design. Undeniably BlackBerry's most advanced device ever, it's still clearly angled towards the business crowd with a focus on productivity. The same old BlackBerry problems persist though, with an inferior OS and app store. It's just too impractical and limited for personal use.

**OS** BlackBerry 10.3  
**Processor** 2.2GHz quad-core  
**Screen** 4.5 inches  
**Resolution** 1,440 x 1,440 pixels  
**Memory** 3GB RAM  
**Storage** 32GB  
**Micro SD compatible?** Yes, up to 128GB  
**Camera** 13MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing  
**Video** 1080p  
**Connectivity** 4G  
**Dimensions** 128 x 90.3 x 9.3mm  
**Weight** 194g  
**Battery** 3,450mAh

**VERDICT:** Premium build and top specs are betrayed by off-putting, strange design.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
FEATURES ★★★★★  
USABILITY ★★★★★  
DESIGN ★★★★★



## BlackBerry Z30

**Reviewed: June 2014, price: £500**  
uk.blackberry.com

Perhaps if BlackBerry had focused on its efforts on making a phone like this five years ago we would be looking at a very different picture now. As it stands, a barren app store, odd features and a monster price tag may kill what could have been a competitive device. It's still surprisingly easy on the eyes though, and its display doesn't look too bad either.

**OS** BlackBerry 10  
**Processor** 1.7GHz dual-core  
**Screen** 5 inches  
**Resolution** 1280 x 720 pixels  
**Memory** 2GB RAM  
**Storage** 16GB  
**MicroSD Compatible?** Yes  
**Camera** 8MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing  
**Video** 1080p  
**Connectivity** 4G  
**Dimensions** 140.7 x 72 x 9.4  
**Weight** 170g  
**Battery** 2,880 mAh

**VERDICT:** Possibly the best BlackBerry yet, but that's not saying an awful lot.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
FEATURES ★★★★★  
USABILITY ★★★★★  
DESIGN ★★★★★



## BWC Stealth V2

**Reviewed: August 2014, price: £300**  
www.bwcdevices.com

With good specs available at low prices there's never been a better time to pick up a rugged smartphone (if that's what you need). The Stealth V2 lives up to both the 'rugged' and 'smart' tags, with surprisingly capable insides. It also passed all of our stress tests, with countless drops, bashes and drownings failing to leave so much as a mark.

**OS** Android 4.2 Jelly Bean  
**Processor** 1.2GHz quad-core  
**Screen** 4 inches  
**Resolution** 854 x 480 pixels  
**Memory** 1GB RAM  
**Storage** 16GB  
**Micro SD compatible?** Yes  
**Camera** 8MP rear-facing, 1.3MP front-facing  
**Video** 720p  
**Connectivity** 3G  
**Dimensions** 133 x 69 x 20mm  
**Weight** 230g  
**Battery** 2,800mAh

**VERDICT:** As smart and tough as it promises.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
FEATURES ★★★★★  
USABILITY ★★★★★  
DESIGN ★★★★★





## CAT B100

**Reviewed:** March 2014, price: £380

[www.catphones.com](http://www.catphones.com)

The CAT B100 withstands harsh conditions and jarring blows with a tough outer shell that absorbs the impact of falls, and impressive waterproofing. Beyond that, the phone lacks features games and apps - but chances are that's not why you're buying this phone. If you need a rugged handset to take adventuring, though, it's more than tough enough.

<b>OS</b> Nucleus 2.1	<b>Connectivity</b> 3G
<b>Processor</b> 1GHz dual-core	<b>Dimensions</b> 122.94 x 55.88 x 7.6mm
<b>Screen</b> 2.2 inches	<b>Weight</b> 136g
<b>Resolution</b> 240 x 320 pixels	<b>Battery</b> 1,150 mAh
<b>Memory</b> 512MB RAM	
<b>Storage</b> 50MB	
<b>MicroSD Compatible?</b> Yes	
<b>Camera</b> 3 MP rear-facing, QVGA front-facing	
<b>Video</b> QVGA	

**VERDICT:** Tough enough to take into a warzone, if a little light on actual function.

PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★★
DESIGN	★★★★★



## Doro 820 Mini

**Reviewed:** May 2015, price: £169

[www.doro.co.uk](http://www.doro.co.uk)

The Doro 820 Mini's software is simple to use; first-time smartphone users and the elderly won't get confused by any cumbersome on-screen options. Unfortunately, this usability has been hampered by hardware problems. A slow processor creates annoying delays when navigating through the phone, whilst a poor build quality ruins what could have otherwise been a decent budget phone.

<b>OS</b> Android 4.1 Jelly Bean	<b>Connectivity</b> 3G
<b>Processor</b> 1GHz dual-core	<b>Size</b> 125 x 69.5 x 14.95mm
<b>Screen</b> 4 inches	<b>Weight</b> 170g
<b>Resolution</b> 480 x 800 pixels	<b>Battery</b> 2,000 mAh
<b>Memory</b> 512MB RAM	
<b>Storage</b> 4GB	
<b>MicroSD Compatible?</b> Yes	
<b>Camera</b> 5 MP rear-facing, QVGA front-facing	
<b>Video</b> 720p	

**VERDICT:** A rugged phone for those who need to rely on it in any environment.

PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★★
DESIGN	★★★★★



## Doro Liberto 810

**Reviewed:** April 2014, price: £145

[www.doro.co.uk](http://www.doro.co.uk)

The Liberto 810 has a comfortable design and a user interface that's ideal for first-time smartphone users and impaired customers. From there, things start to slip. The screen is buried into the handset, making it hard to accurately press smaller buttons, the camera software has some strange issues and we ran into a few bugs. It's a starting point for Doro, but it's hard to recommend it.

<b>OS</b> Android 4.1 Jelly Bean	<b>Dimensions</b> 126 x 66 x 12.5mm
<b>Processor</b> 1GHz	<b>Weight</b> 132g
<b>Screen</b> 3.9 inches	<b>Battery</b> 1,500 mAh
<b>Resolution</b> 480 x 800 pixels	
<b>Memory</b> 512MB RAM	
<b>Storage</b> 500MB	
<b>MicroSD Compatible?</b> Yes	
<b>Camera</b> 5 MP	
<b>Video</b> 480p	
<b>Connectivity</b> 3G	

**VERDICT:** Seniors may be demanding a tailored smartphone, but this isn't it.

PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★★
DESIGN	★★★★★







## Doro Liberto 820

**Reviewed: February 2015, price: £186**  
[www.doro.co.uk](http://www.doro.co.uk)

It's easy to dismiss Doro phones as obsolete. This is to ignore that Doro isn't interested in attracting phone geeks and techno-fashionistas. These phones are for those who value simplicity above processing power. Doro targets the 'senior' market. But with its SOS button and useful short cuts the Liberto 820 will appeal to those who are not slaves to trends in consumer electronics.

**OS** Android 4.4 Kit Kat with Doro Wizard  
**Processor** 1.3GHz quad-core  
**Screen** 5.5 inches  
**Resolution** 940 x 560  
**Memory** 1GB  
**Storage** 4GB  
**Micro SD compatible?** Yes  
**Camera** 8MP  
**Video** 720p

**Connectivity** 3G  
**Dimensions** 13mm x 71mm  
**Weight** 132g  
**Battery** 1,900 mAh

**VERDICT:** A surprisingly well-featured phone for the more tech-savvy of seniors.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★



## Doro PhoneEasy 624

**Reviewed: February 2015, price: £100**  
[www.doro.co.uk](http://www.doro.co.uk)

The PhoneEasy 624 is Doro's best feature phone offering for those who want to keep things as simple, while making sure important contacts are only a button push away. It's got a 3G antenna, lengthy battery life, but a needlessly dire camera.

**OS** Custom  
**Processor** N/A  
**Screen** 2.4 inches  
**Resolution** 320 x 240 pixels  
**Memory** N/A  
**Storage** N/A  
**Micro SD compatible?** Yes  
**Camera** 2MP  
**Video** 720p  
**Connectivity** 3G

**Dimensions** 102 x 52 x 19 mm  
**Weight** 104g  
**Battery** 800 mAh

**VERDICT:** A well featured phone for the price if you're in the market for that sort of thing.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★



## EE Kestrel

**Reviewed: September 2014, price: £99**  
[www.doro.co.uk](http://www.doro.co.uk)

The EE Kestrel is the best entry-level 4G handset on the market and this is in no small part due to Huawei. The manufacturer has built a solid handset that consumers will use beyond its 4G-LTE capability. Although, its weak resolution is a major flaw, it has plenty of other positive attributes including a smooth UI, the ability to handle a vast range of games and decent web and app browsing speeds.

**OS** Android 4.3 (Jelly Bean)  
**Processor** 1.2GHz quad-core  
**Screen** 4.5 inches  
**Resolution** 540 x 960 pixels  
**Memory** 1GB RAM  
**Storage** 8GB  
**Micro SD compatible?** Yes  
**Camera** 5MP rear-facing, 1MP front-facing  
**Video** 1080p

**Connectivity** 4G, 3G  
**Dimensions** 131 x 65.3 x 7.85mm  
**Weight** 145g  
**Battery** 2,000mAh

**VERDICT:** A reliable handset that boasts good usability, if underwhelming specs.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★





## Google Nexus 6

**Reviewed:** March 2015, price: £499

[www.google.com/nexus/6/](http://www.google.com/nexus/6/)

The Nexus 6 is a reminder of exactly what so many manufacturers are doing wrong by overly modifying Android. Google's flagship is a tremendous powerhouse - more of a media hub than a mere smartphone, and one of the best phablets on the market. Whether you'd rather it had a stylus is a matter of preference, though.

**OS** Android 5.0 Lollipop  
**Processor** 2.7 GHz quad-core  
**Screen** 5.96 inches  
**Resolution** 2560 x 1440 pixels  
**Memory** 3GB RAM  
**Storage** 32/64GB  
**Micro SD compatible?** No  
**Camera** 13MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing  
**Video** 4K

**Connectivity** 4G  
**Dimensions** 82.98 mm x 159.26 mm x 10.06 mm  
**Weight** 184g  
**Battery** 3,220 mAh

**VERDICT:** Fast, fresh and tremendously powerful. A dream for Android purists.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★



## HTC Desire 816

**Reviewed:** October 2014, price: £300

[www.htc.com/uk](http://www.htc.com/uk)

In a market lacking a viable midrange phablet the HTC Desire 816 stands out. It might have its flaws, but for the price you can certainly look past them. If you can't, then a midrange device probably isn't for you. For the rest of us, there's no better option for getting your hands on a jumbo screen on the cheap.

**OS** Android 4.4 KitKat  
**Processor** 1.6GHz quad-core  
**Screen** 5.5 inches  
**Resolution** 1280 x 720 pixels  
**Memory** 1.5GB RAM  
**Storage** 8GB  
**Micro SD compatible?** Yes  
**Camera** 13MP rear-facing, 5MP front-facing  
**Video** 1080p

**Connectivity** 4G  
**Dimensions** 156.6 x 78.7 x 7.9mm  
**Weight** 165g  
**Battery** 2,600 mAh

**VERDICT:** A triumphant, large addition to a fantastic 2014 product line for HTC.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★



## HTC Desire 820

**Reviewed:** June 2015, price: £299

[www.htc.com/uk](http://www.htc.com/uk)

A large display, fantastic cameras and attractive design makes the HTC Desire 820 an ideal choice if you're after an affordable phone with plenty of features. It's only been let down by the fact that it doesn't pack an HD screen and that it doesn't run the latest Android software. It's also quite pricey compared to the OnePlus One; a phone that is a serious rival.

**OS** Android 4.4.2 KitKat  
**Processor** Quad-core 1.5 GHz Cortex-A53  
**Screen** 5.5-inches  
**Resolution** 720 x 1280 pixels  
**Memory** 2GB RAM  
**Storage** 16GB  
**Micro SD compatible?** Yes  
**Rear camera** 13MP  
**Front camera** 8MP

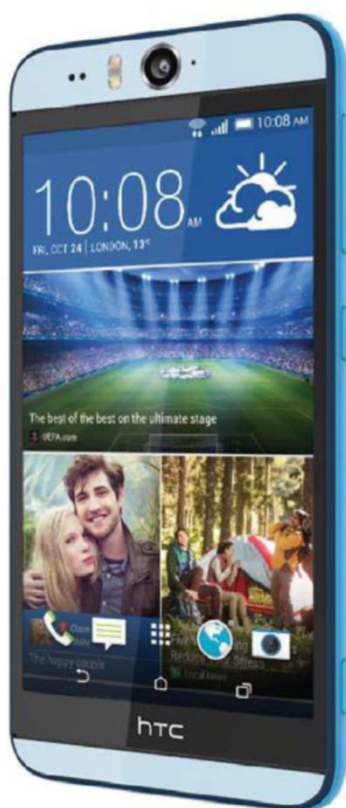
**Video** 1080p at 30fps  
**Connectivity** 4G  
**Dimensions** 157.7 x 78.7 x 7.7 mm  
**Weight** 155g  
**Battery** 2600 mAh

**VERDICT:** Cheap, attractive and packed full of features.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★







## HTC Desire Eye

Reviewed: March 2015, price: £365

[www.htc.com/uk](http://www.htc.com/uk)

Whilst we love the cameras (having a front-facer as highly powered as the rear-facer is a huge boon, particularly for selfie-lovers) the Desire Eye's build quality and price make it a tougher sell than you might think. It does look nice though, and is an interesting concept. Just not a 100% successful one.

**OS** Android 4.4 KitKat  
**Processor** 2.3 GHz quad-core  
**Screen** 5.2 inches  
**Resolution** 1080 x 1920 pixels  
**Memory** 2GB RAM  
**Storage** 16GB  
**Micro SD compatible?** Yes  
**Camera** 13MP rear-facing, 13MP front-facing  
**Video** 1080p

**Connectivity** 4G  
**Dimensions** 151.7 x 73.8 x 8.5 mm  
**Weight** 154g  
**Battery** 2,400 mAh

**VERDICT:** A hard sell when the superior One M8 can now be bought for the same price.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★



## HTC One M8

Reviewed: May 2014, price: £530

[www.htc.com/uk](http://www.htc.com/uk)

The HTC One M8 is, in all probability, the best smartphone ever made. It both looks and performs better than almost everything else out there. Features like Blinkfeed and knock-to-wake are a joy to use. If Apple, Sony and Samsung weren't paying attention before, they certainly are now.

**OS** Android 4.4 KitKat  
**Processor** 2.3GHz quad-core  
**Screen** 5 inches  
**Resolution** 1920 x 1080 pixels  
**Memory** 2GB RAM  
**Storage** 16GB or 32GB  
**MicroSD Compatible?** Yes  
**Camera** 4 MP UltraPixel rear-facing, 5 MP front-facing  
**Video** 1080p

**Connectivity** 4G  
**Dimensions** 146.36 x 70.6 x 9.35 mm  
**Weight** 160g  
**Battery** 2,600 mAh

**VERDICT:** If you can afford it, buy it. There's no better Android handset on the market.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★



## HTC One M9

Reviewed: May 2015, price: £580

[www.htc.com/uk](http://www.htc.com/uk)

The One M9 is HTC's first major release of 2015 and its top-notch build quality, powerful processor and phenomenal battery life makes it one of our favourite phones of this year. However, it doesn't really provide anything different to what flagship rivals like the iPhone 6 already offers. Despite that, the HTC One M9 is still one of the best looking and most powerful phones on the market.

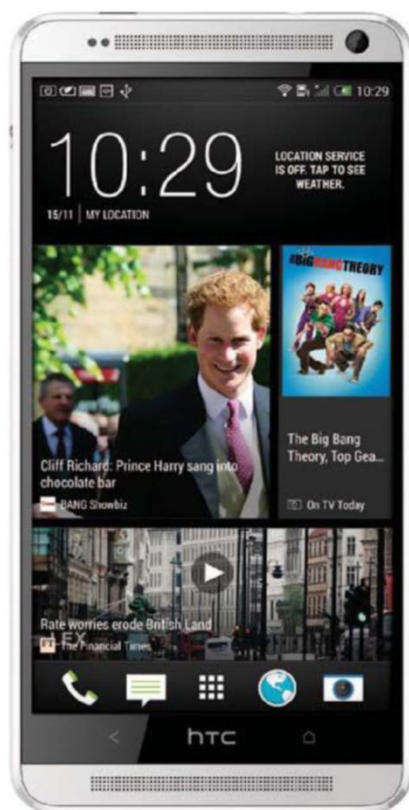
**OS** Android 5.0 Lollipop  
**Processor** 4 x 2GHz + 4 x 1.5GHz octa-core  
**Screen** 5 inches  
**Resolution** 1920 x 1080 pixels  
**Memory** 3 GB RAM  
**Storage** 32GB  
**MicroSD Compatible?** Yes  
**Camera** 20.7MP rear-facing, 4MP UltraPixel front-facing

**Video** 4k  
**Connectivity** 4G  
**Dimensions** 144.6 x 69.7 x 9.61mm  
**Weight** 157g  
**Battery** 2,840mAh

**VERDICT:** It has no unique selling point, but it's still one of the best devices out there.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★





## HTC One Max

**Reviewed:** January 2014, price: £599  
[www.htc.com/uk](http://www.htc.com/uk)

The HTC One Max piggybacks the reputation of the HTC One, although nothing much has improved. The high-quality display is present but HTC has failed to add processing power and the fingerprint sensor implementation is very disappointing.

**OS** Android 4.3 Jelly Bean  
**Processor** 1.7GHz quad-core  
**Screen** 5.9 inches  
**Resolution** 1920 x 1080 pixels  
**Memory** 2GB  
**Storage** 16GB or 32GB  
**MicroSD Compatible?** Yes  
**Camera** 4 MP UltraPixel rear-facing, 2.1 MP front-facing

**Video** 1080p  
**Connectivity** 4G  
**Dimensions** 164.5 x 82.5 x 10.3mm  
**Weight** 217g  
**Battery** 3,300mAh

**VERDICT:** The HTC One's design is still a standout but there's nothing new here.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★



## HTC One Mini 2

**Reviewed:** August 2014, price: £360  
[www.htc.com/uk](http://www.htc.com/uk)

Your opinion of the One Mini 2 will come down to what you mostly use your phone for. If you don't put too much strain on its struggling processor then you should be fine. It's got a magnificent pair of cameras, and that trademark HTC metal unibody build can't be beat. Day-to-day users will be more than satisfied - hardcore tech-heads should stick with the One M8.

**OS** Android 4.4 KitKat  
**Processor** 1.2GHz quad-core  
**Screen** 4.5 inches  
**Resolution** 720 x 1280 pixels  
**Memory** 1GB RAM  
**Storage** 16GB  
**Micro SD compatible?** Yes  
**Camera** 13 MP rear-facing, 5MP front-facing  
**Video** 1080p

**Connectivity** 4G  
**Dimensions** 137.4 x 64 x 10.6mm  
**Weight** 137g  
**Battery** 2,110mAh

**VERDICT:** Powered to match its stature, but still a very polished, attractive device.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★



## Huawei Ascend G7

**Reviewed:** May 2015, price: £205  
[www.huaweidevice.co.uk](http://www.huaweidevice.co.uk)

With a large screen and the gorgeous looks that remind us of the iPhone 6; the Huawei Ascend G7 might look good on the outside, but the software is another story. Huawei has redesigned Google's vanilla Android operating system and reskinned it as something that looks both cheap and ugly. Despite that, the Ascend G7 is a decent choice if you want an iPhone 6-lookalike that runs Android software.

**OS** Android 4.4.2 KitKat  
**Processor** 1.2 GHz quad-core  
**Screen** 5.5 inches  
**Resolution** 720 x 1280 pixels  
**Memory** 2GB RAM  
**Storage** 16GB  
**MicroSD Compatible?** Yes  
**Camera** 13 MP rear-facing, 5 MP front-facing

**Video** 1080p  
**Connectivity** 4G  
**Dimensions** 153.5 x 77.3 x 7.6mm  
**Weight** 165g  
**Battery** 3,000mAh

**VERDICT:** Its great performance is ruined cheap and ugly looking operating system.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★







## Huawei Ascend P7

**Reviewed:** July 2014, **price:** £365

[www.huaweidevice.co.uk](http://www.huaweidevice.co.uk)

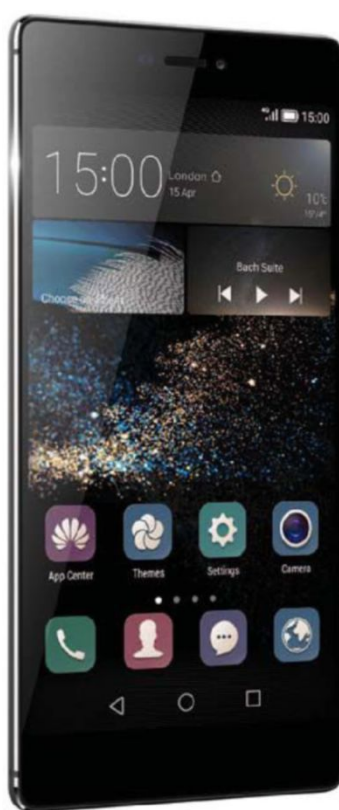
The Ascend P7 feels like a missed opportunity. Huawei should have put their full weight into creating a top-level flagship handset. However, its underpowered processor is its only real flaw. It looks premium, and its front-facing camera is the best on the market. Its price could be a sticking point, but it's by no means a bad device.

**OS** Android 4.4 KitKat  
**Processor** 1.8GHz quad-core  
**Screen** 5 inches  
**Resolution** 1920 x 1080 pixels  
**Memory** 2GB RAM  
**Storage** 16GB  
**MicroSD Compatible?** Yes  
**Camera** 13MP rear-facing, 8MP front-facing  
**Video** 1080p

**Connectivity** 4G LTE  
**Dimensions** 139.8 x 68.8 x 6.5mm  
**Weight** 124g  
**Battery** 2,500mAh

**VERDICT:** It's not quite a market-leading flagship, but at least it looks the part.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★



## Huawei P8

**Reviewed:** August 2015, **price:** £395

[www.huaweidevice.co.uk](http://www.huaweidevice.co.uk)

An attractive device that gives you top-of-the-range specs and a fantastic camera for half the price of the Samsung Galaxy S6 or iPhone. The performance isn't as slick as its major rivals, but that isn't a deal breaker. Especially when the phone costs half the price of the iPhone 6 and Samsung Galaxy S6.

**OS** Android 5.0 Lollipop  
**Processor** 2 GHz quad-core  
**Screen** 5.2 inches  
**Resolution** 1920 x 1080 pixels  
**Memory** 3GB RAM  
**Storage** 16/64GB  
**Camera** 13MP rear-facing, 8MP front-facing  
**Video** 1080p  
**Connectivity** 4G

**Dimensions** 144 x 72 x 6.4 mm  
**Weight** 144g  
**Battery** 2,680 mAh

**VERDICT:** Flagship specs for half the price of a Galaxy S6 or iPhone.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★



## Huawei Honor 4x

**Reviewed:** August 2015, **price:** £144.99

[www.huaweidevice.co.uk](http://www.huaweidevice.co.uk)

An affordable phone that offers solid battery life and plenty of features. The build quality even feels better than the LG G4, a smartphone that costs double its recommended retail price. Honor isn't a big name over in the West, but phones like the 4X are helping it head in that direction. It's just a shame that the processor is a little on the weak side.

**OS** Android 4.4 KitKat  
**Processor** HiSilicon Kirin 620  
**Screen** 4 inches  
**Resolution** 1280 x 720 pixels  
**Memory** 2GB RAM  
**Storage** 8GB  
**Camera** 13MP rear-facing, 5MP front-facing  
**Video** 1080p  
**Connectivity** 4G

**Dimensions** 153 x 77 x 8.7 mm  
**Weight** 165g  
**Battery** 3,000 mAh

**VERDICT:** A solid phone at a bargain price, you'll be surprised at how good it looks.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★





## Huawei Honor 6+

**Reviewed:** July 2015, price: £299.99  
[www.huaweidevice.co.uk](http://www.huaweidevice.co.uk)

If you're after an affordable device with plenty of top-notch features, you can't really go wrong with the Huawei Honor 6+. The camera is unique, the performance is fantastic and battery life is better than more expensive phones. Its slow camera and inability to handle certain apps are only minor negatives - the Honor 6+ is well worth the money.

**OS** Android KitKat 4.4.2  
**Processor** Kirin octo-core 925  
**Screen** 5.5 inches  
**Resolution** 1920 x 1080 pixels  
**Memory** 3GB RAM  
**Storage** 32GB  
**Camera** Dual 8MP rear-facing, 8MP front-facing  
**Video** 1080p  
**Connectivity** 4G

**Dimensions** 151x76x7.5mm  
**Weight** 165g  
**Battery** 3,600 mAh

**VERDICT:** A flagship phone with excellent battery life that doesn't break the bank.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★



## Kazam Tornado 348

**Reviewed:** March 2015, price: £247  
[www.kazam.mobi](http://www.kazam.mobi)

Despite great looks and smooth performance, lack of 4G connectivity and storage makes the Tornado 348 something of a non-starter for serious users. The casual market will be plenty content with what's on offer here - particularly those eye-catching physical dimensions.

**OS** Android KitKat 4.4  
**Processor** 1.7Ghz octa-core  
**Screen** 4.8 inches  
**Resolution** 1280x720 pixels  
**Memory** 1GB RAM  
**Storage** 16GB  
**Micro SD compatible?** No  
**Camera** 8MP rear-facing, 5MP front-facing  
**Video** 720p

**Connectivity** 3G  
**Dimensions** 139.8 x 67.5 x 5.15mm  
**Weight** 95.5g  
**Battery** 2,050 mAh

**VERDICT:** Standout design and performance at an attractive price.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★



## Kazam Thunder Q4.5

**Reviewed:** April 2014, price: £TBC  
[www.kazam.mobi](http://www.kazam.mobi)

The Thunder Q4.5 is a sure case of style over substance, but in the lower-cost end of the market you'd usually be lucky to get either. While the phone lacks standout features it won't let you down when it comes to everyday smartphone functionality. If you're in the market and want to try something new, you could certainly do an awful lot worse.

**OS** Android 4.2 Jelly Bean  
**Processor** 1.3Ghz quad-core  
**Screen** 4.5 inches  
**Resolution** 854 x 480 pixels  
**Memory** 1GB RAM  
**Storage** 1.74GB  
**MicroSD Compatible?** Yes  
**Camera** 8 MP rear-facing, 2 MP front-facing  
**Video** 720p

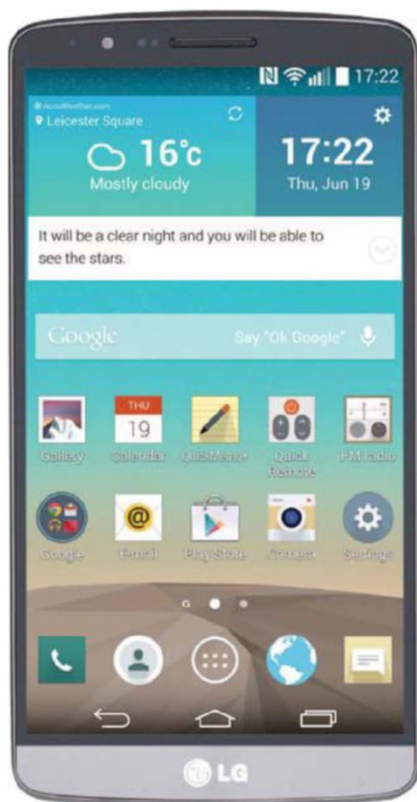
**Connectivity** 3G  
**Dimensions** 136 x 64.6 x 8.9 mm  
**Weight** 137g  
**Battery** 1,800 mAh

**VERDICT:** It may be flawed, but at this price point you'd be hard pushed to beat it.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★







## LG G3

**Reviewed: August 2014, price: £499**

[www.lg.com/uk](http://www.lg.com/uk)

Only minor detractors stop the LG G3 from being the perfect smartphone. That said, there's no such thing as the perfect smartphone just yet, so the G3 is still a wonderful piece of kit. It has outstanding features, hardware, and form to boot. The best display around, a monstrous processor and a variety of little touches all make the G3 a special smartphone.

**OS** Android 4.4 (KitKat)  
**Processor** 2.5GHz quad-core  
**Screen** 5.5 inches  
**Resolution** 1440 x 2560 pixels  
**Memory** 2GB RAM  
**Storage** 16GB or 32GB  
**Micro SD compatible?** Yes  
**Camera** 13MP rear-facing, 2.1MP front-facing  
**Video** 2160p

**Connectivity** 4G  
**Dimensions** 146.3 x 74.6 x 8.9mm  
**Weight** 149g  
**Battery** 3,000mAh

**VERDICT:** Want the best? The G3 is absolutely deserving of your consideration.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★



## LG G4

**Reviewed: July 2015, price: £500**

[www.lg.com/uk](http://www.lg.com/uk)

The unique leather design and incredible camera certainly helps the LG G4 stand out against rivals like the iPhone 6. However, the fact it doesn't have the strongest processor on the market, alongside an average battery and awkward button placement, means it doesn't really stand up as a true iPhone and Galaxy smasher.

**OS** Android 5.1 Lollipop  
**Processor** 1.4GHz quad core  
**Screen** 5.5 inches  
**Resolution** 2560 x 1440 pixels  
**Memory** 3GB RAM  
**Storage** 32GB  
**Camera** 16 MP rear-facing, 8 MP front-facing  
**Video** 1080p  
**Connectivity** 4G

**Dimensions** 149 x 76 x 9.8 mm  
**Weight** 155g  
**Battery** 3,000 mAh

**VERDICT:** A monster device let down by a weak processor. Not a Galaxy S6 killer.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★



## LG G Flex

**Reviewed: April 2014, price: £570**

[www.lg.com/uk](http://www.lg.com/uk)

The curved display may add very little, but with a state-of-the-art spec sheet and a fantastic display, the LG G Flex nails the basics of a high-end smartphone. However the £570 price and so-so camera make it difficult to recommend - at least when compared to its cheaper, better rivals. The Flex just isn't the innovation LG believe it to be.

**OS** Android 4.2 Jelly Bean  
**Processor** 2.2GHz quad-core  
**Screen** 6 inches  
**Resolution** 1280 x 720 pixels  
**Memory** 2GB RAM  
**Storage** 32GB  
**MicroSD Compatible?** No  
**Camera** 13 MP rear-facing, 2.1 MP front-facing  
**Video** 1080p

**Connectivity** 4G  
**Dimensions** 160.5 x 81.6 x 7.9 mm  
**Weight** 177g  
**Battery** 3,500 mAh

**VERDICT:** A powerful phone held back by a steep price for an unnecessary gimmick.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★





## LG Spirit 4G

**Reviewed:** August 2015, price: £129.99  
[www.lg.com/uk](http://www.lg.com/uk)

At only £129.99, there's little to criticise in this budget mid-range device that looks a lot like a shrunk down LG G4. It has enough performance for most users and comes with Android 5.0 right out of the box. The only problem is the weak front and rear cameras which distract from an otherwise competent package.

**OS** Android 5.1 Lollipop  
**Processor** 1.3 Ghz quad-core  
**Screen** 4.7 inches  
**Resolution** 1280 x 720  
**Memory** 1GB RAM  
**Storage** 8GB  
**Camera** 8MP rear-facing, 1MP front-facing  
**Video** 1080p  
**Connectivity** 4G

**Dimensions** 133 x 66 x 10 mm  
**Weight** 124g  
**Battery** 2,100 mAh

**VERDICT:** A competent mid-range device with Android Lollipop and good specs.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★



## Motorola Moto E (2015)

**Reviewed:** May 2015, price: £109  
[www.motorola.co.uk](http://www.motorola.co.uk)

Paying £109 for a full-blown, powerful 4G smartphone is seriously good value for money. This value is only increased by a high-quality camera, powerful processor and excellent battery life. The only major faults we found when testing the phone included no LED camera flash, a plastic body that easily picks up marks and a fiddly SIM-card slot.

**OS** Android 5.0.2 Lollipop  
**Processor** Qualcomm Snapdragon 410, 1.2 GHz quad-core  
**Screen** 4.5 inches  
**Resolution** 540 X 960 pixels  
**Memory** 1GB RAM  
**Storage** 8GB  
**MicroSD Compatible?** Yes  
**Camera** 5MP rear-facing,

640 x 480 front-facing  
**Connectivity** 4G  
**Dimensions** 129.9 x 66.8mm, 146g  
**Weight** 145g  
**Battery** 2,390 mAh

**VERDICT:** After a smartphone that's seriously good value? This is for you.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★



## Motorola Moto G

**Reviewed:** January 2014, price: £135  
[www.motorola.co.uk](http://www.motorola.co.uk)

The Moto G is a budget smartphone done right. It makes smart and sensible sacrifices to slash its price to a point that puts its rivals to shame. For people who don't demand the highest specs and best camera from a phone, the Moto G's easy-to-use system and fast speeds make it an ideal choice.

**OS** Android 4.3 Jelly Bean  
**Processor** 1.2GHz quad-core  
**Screen** 4.5 inches  
**Resolution** 720 x 1280 pixels  
**Memory** 1GB RAM  
**Storage** 8GB/16GB  
**MicroSD Compatible?** No  
**Camera** 5MP rear-facing, 1.3MP front-facing  
**Video** 720p

**Connectivity** 3G  
**Dimensions** 129.9 x 65.9 x 11.6mm  
**Weight** 143g  
**Battery** 2,070 mAh

**VERDICT:** The best option for customers on a budget.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★







## Motorola Moto G (2014)

Reviewed: November 2014, price: £150

[www.motorola.co.uk](http://www.motorola.co.uk)

It's an updated version of the Moto G - nothing more, nothing less. The lack of 4G is extremely disappointing, and a processor upgrade would have been nice. Still, a bigger screen, a better camera and microSD compatibility is extremely welcome. When it comes to affordable phones that can actually perform, the Moto G is still untouchable.

**OS** Android 4.4 KitKat  
**Processor** 1.2GHz quad-core  
**Screen** 5 inches  
**Resolution** 1280 x 720 pixels  
**Memory** 1GB RAM  
**Storage** 8GB/16GB  
**Micro SD compatible?** Yes, up to 32GB  
**Camera** 8MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing  
**Video** 720p  
**Connectivity** 3G  
**Dimensions** 141.5 x 70.7 x 11mm  
**Weight** 149g  
**Battery** 2,070mAh

**VERDICT:** A solid improvement on the best, but no 4G gives it a limited shelf life.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★



## Motorola Moto G 4G

Reviewed: June 2015, price: £150

[www.motorola.co.uk](http://www.motorola.co.uk)

One of the best value smartphones on the market, the large display, 4G connectivity and latest Android operating software makes it well worth the price. Combine all of this with the phone's fantastic build quality and the Motorola Moto G 4G is well worth keeping after your contract expires.

**OS** Android 5.0 Lollipop  
**Processor** Quad-core 1.2 GHz Cortex-A53  
**Screen** 5.0-inches  
**Resolution** 720 x 1280 pixels  
**Memory** 1GB RAM  
**Storage** 8/16GB  
**Micro SD compatible?** Yes  
**Rear camera** 8MP  
**Front camera** 2MP  
**Video** 720p at 30fps  
**Connectivity** 4G  
**Dimensions** 141.5 x 70.7 x 11 mm  
**Weight** 155g  
**Battery** 2390 mAh

**VERDICT:** Priced between £200 - £400, this smartphone undermines the competition.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★



## Motorola Moto X

Reviewed: March 2014, price: £380

[www.motorola.co.uk](http://www.motorola.co.uk)

The Moto X is a rock-solid handset with unique, helpful features. This is the best place to experience Google Now, making voice operation genuinely useful. Mix in a sleek design, great camera and long battery life and the £380 price tag is justified. If you can afford the extra £150 then it makes for a sterling upper-mid tier upgrade to the Motorola Moto G.

**OS** Android 4.4 KitKat  
**Processor** 1.7GHz dual-core  
**Screen** 4.7 inches  
**Resolution** 720 x 1280 pixels  
**Memory** 2GB RAM  
**Storage** 16GB/32GB  
**MicroSD Compatible?** No  
**Camera** 10MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing  
**Video** 1080p  
**Connectivity** 4G  
**Dimensions** 129.3 x 65.3 x 10.4mm  
**Weight** 130g  
**Battery** 2,200 mAh

**VERDICT:** For those looking to step up from the budget tier: your search is over.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★





## Motorola Moto X (2014)

**Reviewed:** January 2015, price: £420  
[www.motorola.co.uk](http://www.motorola.co.uk)

Motorola's original Moto X was a nice idea executed a little too late, especially in the UK. Competition from superior phones from manufacturers with a stronger recent track record was too great to overcome. But this latest version of the Moto X makes a much stronger case for your cash. It's got some excellent features and will surely be beloved by hardcore fans of stock Android.

<b>OS</b> Android 4.4 KitKat	<b>Connectivity</b> 4G
<b>Processor</b> 2.5GHz quad-core	<b>Dimensions</b> 140.8 x 72.4 x 10mm
<b>Screen</b> 5.2 inches	<b>Weight</b> 144g
<b>Resolution</b> 1,080 x 1,920 pixels	<b>Battery</b> 2,300 mAh
<b>Memory</b> 2GB RAM	
<b>Storage</b> 16/32GB	
<b>MicroSD compatible?</b> No	
<b>Camera</b> 13MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing	
<b>Video</b> 2160p	

**VERDICT:** The best Motorola ever, and arguably the best Android handset of 2014.

PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★★
DESIGN	★★★★★



## Nokia Asha 503

**Reviewed:** February 2014, price: £70  
[www.microsoft.com/en-gb/mobile/](http://www.microsoft.com/en-gb/mobile/)

Nokia's Asha 503 is a brilliantly tiny handset that stays usable despite the smaller screen. If you want a dirt-cheap phone then you might be better off with a sub-£50 handset and its design is a little spiky. But anyone looking for a phone to keep them busy for five minutes on a bus will find plenty to love here.

<b>OS</b> Nokia Asha platform 1.2	<b>Dimensions</b> 102.6 x 60.6 x 12.7mm
<b>Processor</b> N/A	<b>Weight</b> 110.2g
<b>Screen</b> 3 inches	<b>Battery</b> 1,200 mAh
<b>Resolution</b> 240 x 320 pixels	
<b>Memory</b> 128MB RAM	
<b>Storage</b> 4GB	
<b>MicroSD Compatible?</b> Yes	
<b>Camera</b> 5 MP rear-facing	
<b>Video</b> QVGA	
<b>Connectivity</b> 3G	

**VERDICT:** A good entry into the budget market that offers more than the basics.

PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★★
DESIGN	★★★★★



## Nokia Lumia 520

**Reviewed:** June 2013, price: £99.95  
[www.microsoft.com/en-gb/mobile/](http://www.microsoft.com/en-gb/mobile/)

A good budget offering from Nokia which is let down by its struggles to handle the tasks required of it. Cheaper than the 620 which nevertheless had less performance issues. The 520 packs a good camera and battery life, however there are both cheaper phones which perform better and more expensive phones which don't.

<b>OS</b> Windows Phone 8	<b>Dimensions</b> 119.9 x 64 x 9.9mm
<b>Processor</b> 1GHz dual-core	<b>Weight</b> 124g
<b>Screen</b> 4 inches	<b>Battery</b> 1,430 mAh
<b>Resolution</b> 800 x 480	
<b>Memory</b> 512MB RAM	
<b>Storage</b> 8GB	
<b>MicroSD Compatible?</b> Yes	
<b>Cameras</b> 5 MP	
<b>Video</b> 720p	
<b>Connectivity</b> 3G	

**VERDICT:** A good camera, battery and price but the phone can struggle with tasks.

PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★★
DESIGN	★★★★★







## Nokia Lumia 625

**Reviewed: October 2013, price: £180**

[www.microsoft.com/en-gb/mobile/](http://www.microsoft.com/en-gb/mobile/)

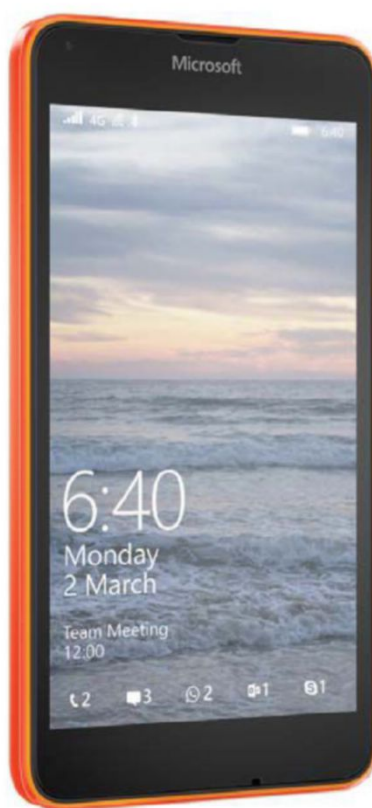
The sizeable 4.7-inch screen saves the 625 from its disappointingly short battery life and lack of HD viewing. It's plagued further by the Lumia range's other issues like a limited app store, but fights back with a decent camera. As a result it stands as a viable budget-range phone.

**OS** Windows Phone 8  
**Processor** 1.2GHz dual-core  
**Screen** 4.7 inches  
**Resolution** 480 x 800 pixels  
**Memory** 512 MB RAM  
**Storage** 8GB  
**MicroSD Compatible?** Yes  
**Camera** 5 MP rear-facing, VGA front-facing  
**Video** 1080p

**Connectivity** 4G-LTE  
**Dimensions** 133.3 x 72.3 x 9.2 mm  
**Weight** 159g  
**Battery** 2,000mAh

**VERDICT:** A decent budget smartphone with its fair share of shortcomings.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★



## Nokia Lumia 640

**Reviewed: August 2015, price: £109.99**

[www.microsoft.com/en-gb/mobile/](http://www.microsoft.com/en-gb/mobile/)

It's incredible what Microsoft has managed to cram into such a cheap, inconspicuous phone. They've nailed all the major points internally, with a great camera, excellent battery and an adequate processor for the well-optimised Windows Phone OS. The only problem is Windows Phone itself, which still struggles to convince the sceptics.

**OS** Windows Phone 8.1 GDR2  
**Processor** 1.2GHz quad-core  
**Screen** 5 inches  
**Resolution** 1280 x 720  
**Memory** 1GB RAM  
**Storage** 8GB  
**Camera** 8 MP rear-facing, 1MP front-facing  
**Video** 1080p  
**Connectivity** 4G

**Dimensions** 141 x 72 x 8.8 mm  
**Weight** 145g  
**Battery** 2,500 mAh

**VERDICT:** A brilliant battery and solid performance make this a bargain device.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★



## Nokia Lumia 720

**Reviewed: July 2013, price: £299**

[www.microsoft.com/en-gb/mobile/](http://www.microsoft.com/en-gb/mobile/)

A fairly solid mid-tier offering which suffered some setbacks at start up, the 720 features a Carl Zeiss lens and a slightly better looking screen and performing processor. Aside from this, the Lumia 720 isn't wonderfully different from its lower priced siblings and showed signs of wear and tear after a week, although its camera lives up to the Lumia name. Microsoft's app store is still fairly limited, however.

**OS** Windows Phone 8  
**Processor** 1GHz dual-core  
**Screen** 4.3 inches  
**Resolution** 480 x 800 pixels  
**Memory** 512MB RAM  
**Storage** 8GB  
**MicroSD Compatible?** Yes  
**Cameras** 6.7MP front-facing, 1.3MP front-facing  
**Video** 720p

**Connectivity** 3G  
**Dimensions** 127.9 x 67.5 x 9mm  
**Weight** 128g  
**Battery** 2,000mAh

**VERDICT:** A fairly solid mid-tier device but not too different from lower priced siblings.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★





## Nokia Lumia 735

**Reviewed: December 2014, price: £299**  
[www.microsoft.com/en-gb/mobile/](http://www.microsoft.com/en-gb/mobile/)

Microsoft has produced a genuine rival to the bestselling Motorola Moto G in the form of the Lumia 735. With the introduction of an HD display and 4G LTE this is much more than just another selfie phone. But if selfies are what you're after the Lumia 735 offers plenty of fun ways to snap images of you and your friends with its 5-megapixel front camera.

**OS** Windows Phone 8.1  
**Processor** 1.2GHz quad-core  
**Screen** 4.7 inches  
**Resolution** 1,280 x 720 pixels  
**Memory** 1GB RAM  
**Storage** 8GB  
**Micro SD compatible?** Yes  
**Camera** 6.7MP rear-facing, 5MP front-facing  
**Video** 1080p  
**Connectivity** 4G  
**Dimensions** 134.7 x 68.5 x 8.9mm  
**Weight** 134g  
**Battery** 2,200mAh

**VERDICT:** A Windows Phone to match the Moto G, the 735 is a selfie star.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★



## Nokia Lumia 830

**Reviewed: March 2015, price: £267**  
[www.microsoft.com/en-gb/mobile/](http://www.microsoft.com/en-gb/mobile/)

The Nokia Lumia 830 is not quite the swan-song we were hoping for. It's not hugely affordable, and nor does the phone's hardware make full use of that 4G connectivity. Mid-range mobiles seldom convince us of their reason to exist and this final Nokia is no exception. It does look the part, and Cortana is improving, but there are simply better options out there.

**OS** Windows Phone 8.1  
**Processor** 1.2GHz quad-core  
**Screen** 5 inches  
**Resolution** 720 x 1280 pixels  
**Memory** 1GB RAM  
**Storage** 16GB  
**Micro SD compatible?** Yes, up to 128GB  
**Camera** 10MP rear-facing, 0.9MP front-facing  
**Video** 1080p  
**Connectivity** 4G  
**Dimensions** 139.4 x 70.7 x 8.5 mm  
**Weight** 150g  
**Battery** 2,200 mAh

**VERDICT:** Underpowered and overpriced, the Lumia 830 is average and forgettable.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★



## Nokia Lumia 925

**Reviewed: August 2013, price: £479**  
[www.microsoft.com/en-gb/mobile/](http://www.microsoft.com/en-gb/mobile/)

With the Lumia 925 Nokia haven't set out to reinvent the wheel, they've just built on their past achievements to put together a brilliant phone. A gorgeous slimmed-down design, high performance camera and responsive user interface all set this handset apart from the rest of the Lumia range and make it a top level device in the high-end smartphone market. One of the best out there.

**OS** Windows Phone 8  
**Processor** 1.5GHz dual-core  
**Screen** 4.5 inches  
**Resolution** 1280 x 760  
**Memory** 1GB RAM  
**Storage** 16GB/32GB  
**MicroSD Compatible?** Yes  
**Camera** 8MP rear-facing, 1.3MP front-facing  
**Video** 1080p  
**Connectivity** 4G  
**Dimensions** 129 x 70.6 x 8.5 mm  
**Weight** 139g  
**Battery** 2,000 mAh

**VERDICT:** A fantastic camera, slick design and great user interface make this top dog.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★







## Nokia Lumia 930

**Reviewed: September 2014, price: £420**  
[www.microsoft.com/en-gb/mobile/](http://www.microsoft.com/en-gb/mobile/)

The plus side for those looking for something different is that Windows Phone has come along enough now that its mere presence on a handset isn't enough to relegate it completely. The Lumia 930 is the flagship that the range has been crying out for for far too long now, and if you don't mind having a relatively restricted ecosystem then you should have very few issues with it.

**OS** Windows Phone 8.1  
**Processor** 2.2GHz quad-core  
**Screen** 5 inches  
**Resolution** 1920 x 1080 pixels  
**Memory** 2GB RAM  
**Storage** 32GB  
**Micro SD compatible?** No  
**Camera** 20MP rear-facing, 1.2MP front-facing

**Video** 1080p  
**Connectivity** 4G LTE  
**Dimensions** 137 x 71 x 9.8mm  
**Weight** 167g  
**Battery** 2,420mAh

**VERDICT:** The closest to rivalling Android and iOS that Windows Phone has ever come.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★



## Nokia Lumia 1020

**Reviewed: November 2013, price: £639.99**  
[www.microsoft.com/en-gb/mobile/](http://www.microsoft.com/en-gb/mobile/)

The Lumia 1020 is an ideal smartphone for those of you who don't care about apps and it's perfect if you love to take great pictures. It might not be the slimmest device you can get your hands on but the 1020's powerful camera is well worth the extra bulk.

**OS** Windows Phone 8  
**Processor** 1.5GHz dual-core  
**Screen** 4.5 inches  
**Resolution** 1280 x 760  
**Memory** 2GB RAM  
**Storage** 32GB  
**MicroSD Compatible?** Yes  
**Camera** 41MP rear-facing, 1.2MP front-facing  
**Video** 1080p

**Connectivity** 4G  
**Dimensions** 130.4 x 71.4 x 10.4 mm  
**Weight** 158g  
**Battery** 2,000 mAh battery

**VERDICT:** A top smartphone with an astounding camera – one of the best.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★



## Nokia Lumia 1320

**Reviewed: April 2014, price: £280**  
[www.microsoft.com/en-gb/mobile/](http://www.microsoft.com/en-gb/mobile/)

The Lumia 925 and 1020 were large enough, and the lack of software taking advantage of the big display, unlike with the Samsung Galaxy Note, means those extra inches just leave you looking faintly ridiculous when answering a call. You're better off spending your money on an Android phablet or Google's Nexus 5.

**OS** Windows Phone 8  
**Processor** 1.7GHz dual-core  
**Screen** 6 inches  
**Resolution** 1280 x 720 pixels  
**Memory** 1GB  
**Storage** 8GB  
**MicroSD Compatible?** Yes  
**Camera** 5MP rear-facing, VGA front-facing  
**Video** 1080p

**Connectivity** 4G-LTE  
**Dimensions** 164.2 x 85.9 x 9.8mm  
**Weight** 220g  
**Battery** 3,400 mAh

**VERDICT:** A good phone, but the Nexus 5 simply undercuts the competition too well.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★





## Nokia Lumia 1520

Reviewed: February 2014, price: £550

[www.microsoft.com/en-gb/mobile/](http://www.microsoft.com/en-gb/mobile/)

Although the Nokia Lumia 1520 weighs in at a whopping £550 (SIM-free), it could cost you considerably more to purchase a standalone camera, camcorder, satnav, tablet and a laptop computer that can run Microsoft Office.

**OS** Windows Phone 8  
**Processor** 2.2GHz quad-core  
**Screen** 6 inches  
**Resolution** 1920 x 1080 pixels  
**Memory** 2GB RAM  
**Storage** 32GB  
**MicroSD Compatible?** Yes  
**Camera** 20MP rear-facing, 1.2MP front-facing  
**Video** 1080p

**Connectivity** 4G-LTE  
**Dimensions** 162.8 x 85.4 x 8.7mm  
**Weight** 209g  
**Battery** 3,200 mAh

**VERDICT:** A great all-in-one device that mashes the best of Nokia together.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★



## OnePlus One

Reviewed: June 2015, price: £269

[www.oneplus.net](http://www.oneplus.net)

If you're not bothered about Samsung, Apple or any of the other big brand names, then we highly recommend the OnePlus One. It offers class-leading specs for half the price of an iPhone 6 or Samsung Galaxy S6. That attractive price is topped off by excellent build quality and unlimited customisation options.

**OS** Cyanogenmod version of Android 4.4  
**Processor** 2.5GHz quad-core Qualcomm Snapdragon 801  
**Screen** 5.5 inches Gorilla Glass 3  
**Resolution** 1920 x 1080  
**Memory** 3GB RAM  
**Storage** 64GB  
**Micro SD compatible?** Yes

**Rear camera** 13MP  
**Front camera** 5MP  
**Connectivity** 4G, dual-band wi-fi, Bluetooth 4.0, NFC, GOS antenna  
**Video** 1080 HD  
**Dimensions** 152.9 x 75.9 x 8.9mm  
**Weight** 162g  
**Battery** 3100 mAh

**VERDICT:** A top-spec smartphone for half the price of the iPhone 6? Yes please!

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★



## Prestigio MultiPhone 5430

Reviewed: November 2013, price: £190

[www.prestigio.com](http://www.prestigio.com)

The Prestigio MultiPhone 5430 is a bland piece of kit that lacks any real highlights, but is undoubtedly a capable and efficient smartphone. Perhaps its best feature is that it gets the core experience right, if not groundbreakingly so. The very basics of what you expect from a smartphone in 2013 are here but there isn't much else.

**OS** Android 4.0 Ice Cream Sandwich  
**Processor** Intel Atom 1.2GHz  
**Screen** 4.3 inches  
**Resolution** 1920 x 1080 pixels  
**Memory** 1GB RAM  
**Storage** 4GB  
**MicroSD Compatible?** Yes  
**Camera** 8MP rear-facing, 0.3MP front-facing

**Video** 1080p  
**Connectivity** 3G  
**Dimensions** 126 x 64.7 x 10mm  
**Weight** 140g  
**Battery** 2,000 mAh

**VERDICT:** Perfectly ordinary – but it's positioned as an everyday smartphone.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★







## Prestigio 4500 DUO

Reviewed: June 2013, price: £179

[www.prestigio.com](http://www.prestigio.com)

The Prestigio fails to dazzle, offering nothing fresh, but it is a user friendly, well featured and well priced device that ticks all the right boxes for a smartphone. It offers a smooth Android experience in a classic design with a competitive price tag and could go up against the likes of Huawei or HTC's budget brands. A solid offering from a lesser known brand.

**OS** Android 2.3 Gingerbread  
**Processor** 1.2GHz dual-core  
**Screen** 3.5 inches  
**Resolution** 480 x 800 pixels  
**Memory** 512MB RAM  
**Storage** 4GB  
**MicroSD Compatible?** Yes  
**Camera** 5MP rear-facing, VGA front-facing  
**Video** 480p

**Connectivity** 3G  
**Dimensions** 117 x 59 x 11mm  
**Weight** 120g  
**Battery** 1,850 mAh

**VERDICT:** Nothing new but this is a user friendly, well priced well featured device.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★



## Samsung Galaxy A7

Reviewed: July 2015, price: £319.99

[www.samsung.com/uk](http://www.samsung.com/uk)

The Samsung Galaxy A7 is an attractive proposition. But looks aren't everything. The cheaper £269 OnePlus One offers more power, a similar screen size and up-to-date software. And the £129 Vodafone Smart 4 Max with a bigger screen is less than half the price. If it's about power, not just looking powerful, perhaps look elsewhere.

**OS** Android 4.4 KitKat  
**Processor** 1.5GHz Quad-core  
**Screen** 5.5-inches  
**Resolution** 1080 x 1920 pixels  
**Memory** 2GB RAM  
**Storage** 16GB  
**Camera** 13 MP  
**Video** Yes  
**Connectivity** 3G

**Dimensions** 151 x 76.2 x 6.3mm  
**Weight** 141g  
**Battery** 2,600 mAh

**VERDICT:** An attractive device, but it has less power than similar devices.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★



## Samsung Galaxy Ace 3

Reviewed: March 2014, price: £180

[www.samsung.com/uk](http://www.samsung.com/uk)

The Samsung Galaxy Ace 3 is a good handset that's been made irrelevant by cheaper competition. Whilst it packs a vibrant display and solid specs, similar phones sit well below the £180 benchmark set here. Samsung will have to rethink its pricing. If it weren't for the Moto G's release this would be an emphatic recommendation - unfortunately Samsung will have to settle for the silver medal.

**OS** Android 4.2 Jelly Bean  
**Processor** 1.2GHz dual-core  
**Screen** 4 inches  
**Resolution** 480 x 800 pixels  
**Memory** 1GB RAM  
**Storage** 8GB/16GB  
**MicroSD Compatible?** Yes  
**Camera** 5MP rear-facing, VGA front-facing  
**Video** 720p

**Connectivity** 4G LTE  
**Dimensions** 121.2 x 62.7 x 9.8mm  
**Weight** 115g  
**Battery** 1,500 mAh

**VERDICT:** Premium build quality and visuals at a good price - just not a great one.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★





## Samsung Galaxy K Zoom

**Reviewed: October 2014, price: £400**  
[www.samsung.com/uk](http://www.samsung.com/uk)

We can see what Samsung set out to achieve with the Galaxy K zoom, and creating a solid Android smartphone with an optical zoom is no small feat. However, it looks like a dated digital camera at best - newer devices are much more compact. If you're after a smartphone with a solid snapper, we'd advise you to seek out the LG G3 or Sony Xperia Z2 instead.

**OS** Android 4.4 (KitKat)  
**Processor** Hexa-core: 1.3GHz quad-core + 1.7GHz dual-core  
**Screen** 4.8 inches  
**Resolution** 1,280 x 720 pixels  
**Memory** 2GB RAM  
**Storage** 8GB  
**Micro SD compatible?** Yes  
**Camera** 20.7MP rear-facing, 2MP front

**Video** 1080p  
**Connectivity** 4G  
**Dimensions** 137.5 x 70.8 x 16.6mm  
**Weight** 200g  
**Battery** 2,430mAh

**VERDICT:** A decent smartphone and an excellent camera in a hideous body.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★



## Samsung Galaxy Mega

**Reviewed: October 2013, price: £440**  
[www.samsung.com/uk](http://www.samsung.com/uk)

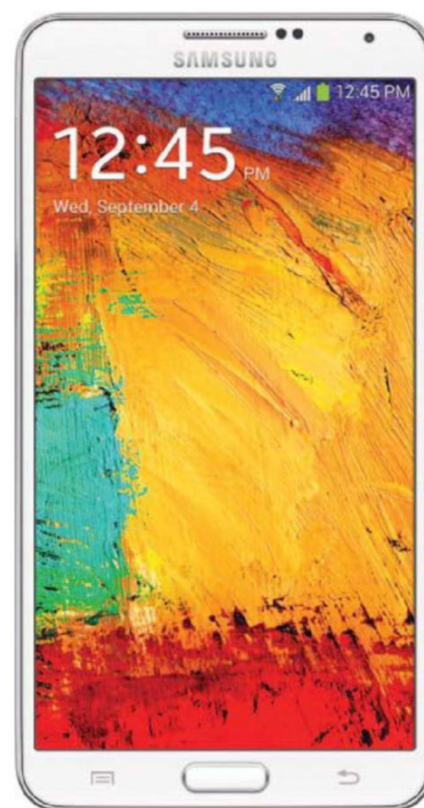
With a 6.3-inch screen, the Galaxy Mega falls into phablet territory, but that doesn't change the fact that said screen is hypnotically vibrant. As such, it's a great video player and has room for a sizeable battery. Its resolution, however, is a minor issue and it doesn't have enough internal storage to meet our needs. It will stick out like a sore thumb but you might just fall in love with it.

**OS** Android 4.2 Jelly Bean  
**Processor** 1.7GHz quad-core  
**Screen** 6.3 inches  
**Resolution** 720 x 1280 pixels  
**Memory** 2GB RAM  
**Storage** 8GB  
**MicroSD Compatible?** Yes  
**Camera** 8 MP rear-facing, 1.9 MP front-facing  
**Video** 1080p

**Connectivity** 4G LTE  
**Dimensions** 167.6 x 88 x 8 mm  
**Weight** 199g  
**Battery** 3,200 mAh

**VERDICT:** For better or worse it's all about the big, vibrant screen with this handset.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★



## Samsung Galaxy Note 3

**Reviewed: December 2013, price: £649**  
[www.samsung.com/uk](http://www.samsung.com/uk)

The Note 3 steps over the competition with its large, engulfing display and great battery life. But it's the stylus that's the star of the show here, with great integration that makes it an ideal Note-keeping device. This makes it ideal for business people on the move, although they'll have to make sure they keep an eye on the easy-to-lose pen at all times.

**OS** Android 4.3 Jelly Bean  
**Processor** 2.3GHz quad-core  
**Screen** 5.7 inches  
**Resolution** 1080 x 1920 pixels  
**Memory** 3GB RAM  
**Storage** 16/32/64GB  
**MicroSD Compatible?** Yes  
**Camera** 13 MP front-facing, 2MP rear-facing  
**Video** 4K

**Dimensions** 151.2 x 79.2 x 8.3 mm  
**Weight** 168g  
**Battery** 3,200 mAh

**VERDICT:** A fantastic portable business device with helpful, unique features.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★







## Samsung Galaxy Note 4

Reviewed: December 2013, price: £498

[www.samsung.com/uk](http://www.samsung.com/uk)

This year's effort ensures the Note remains top of the phablet pile, but unless you're particularly taken with the stylus and split-screen app combo, you shouldn't discount the latest flagship phones. The LG G3 and new Motorola Moto X are stunning devices, only slightly smaller in size and power. Unless you've got a thing for faux leather, that is, in which case the Note 4 is the best gadget ever made.

**OS** Android 4.4 KitKat  
**Processor** 2.7GHz quad-core  
**Screen** 5.7 inches  
**Resolution** 1,440 x 2,560-pixels  
**Memory** 3GB RAM  
**Storage** 32GB  
**Micro SD compatible?** Yes  
**Camera** 16MP rear-facing, 3.7MP front-facing

**Video** 2160p at 30fps  
**Connectivity** 4G  
**Dimensions** 153.5 x 78.6 x 8.5mm  
**Weight** 176g  
**Battery** 3,220mAh

**VERDICT:** Still king of the phablets, but not by such a distance this time around.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★



## Samsung Galaxy Note Edge

Reviewed: April 2015, price: £610

[www.samsung.com/uk](http://www.samsung.com/uk)

The Samsung Galaxy Note Edge points to an exciting future when we no longer have to accept that a smartphone screen has to be rectangular. As is often the case with a new technology, though, it needs more work. As cool as the edge looks, it serves little purpose, other than to make this a more expensive Note 4. Call us when the screen wraps all the way around, Samsung.

**OS** Android 4.4.4 KitKat  
**Processor** Quad-core 2.7GHz  
**Screen** 5.6-inches  
**Resolution** 1,600 x 2,560 pixels  
**Memory** 3GB RAM  
**Storage** 32/64GB  
**MicroSD compatible?** Yes  
**Camera** 16MP rear-facing,

3.7MP front-facing  
**Video** 4K @ 60fps  
**Connectivity** 4G  
**Dimensions** 151.3 x 82.4 x 8.3mm  
**Weight** 174g  
**Battery** 3,000mAh

**VERDICT:** A worthwhile endeavour - for Samsung's engineers, not the consumer.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★



## Samsung Galaxy S3

Reviewed: July 2012, price: £485

[www.samsung.com/uk](http://www.samsung.com/uk)

Matching up to the mighty Galaxy S II was always going to be a tall order, but with the release of the Galaxy S III Samsung has clearly surpassed expectations. With its stunning design, amazing usability, high-powered performance and cutting-edge features, it measures up to the best of the competition and sets a new benchmark for its rivals. If you're looking for one of the best smartphones you can buy, this is it.

**OS** Android 4.0 Ice Cream Sandwich  
**Processor** 1.4GHz ARM Cortex-A9  
**Screen** 4.8 inches  
**Resolution** 720 x 1280 pixels  
**Memory** 1GB RAM  
**Storage** 16/32/64GB  
**MicroSD Compatible?** Yes  
**Camera** 8MP rear-facing,

1.9MP front-facing  
**Video** 1080p  
**Connectivity** 4G LTE  
**Size** 137 x 71 x 9mm  
**Weight** 133g  
**Battery** 2,100 mAh

**VERDICT:** A masterpiece of design and usability. This is the benchmark to beat.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★





## Samsung Galaxy S3 Mini

**Reviewed:** January 2013, price: £300

[www.samsung.com/uk](http://www.samsung.com/uk)

Something of a misnomer, this is no relation to its bigger brother, the S III, despite the design similarities. The Mini is little more than a shrunk down Galaxy S II. If users want a budget Galaxy, they are better off pursuing that (former) flagship on a budget plan - this is extortionately expensive for what you get.

**OS** Android 4.1 Jelly Bean  
**Processor** 1GHz dual-core  
**Screen** 4 inches  
**Resolution** 480 x 800 pixels  
**Memory** 1GHz RAM  
**Storage** 8/16GB  
**MicroSD Compatible?** Yes  
**Camera** 5MP rear-facing, 0.3MP front-facing  
**Video** 720p

**Connectivity** 3G  
**Dimensions** 121.6 x 63 x 9.9 mm  
**Weight** 111.5g  
**Battery** 1,500 mAh

**VERDICT:** A cheeky move by Samsung to pass this off as a premium device. It's not.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★



## Samsung Galaxy S4

**Reviewed:** July 2012, price: £550

[www.samsung.com/uk](http://www.samsung.com/uk)

An impressive hardware offering with intriguing new software and camera features but these need to be perfected and integrated into the device as a whole before the S4 can really be called a knock out. While the phone's processor seemed to struggle with games and the design is pretty similar to the S3, this is a solid offering from Samsung in the flagship race.

**OS** Android 4.2 Jelly Bean  
**CPU** 1.6 GHz quad-core  
**Screen** 5 inches  
**Resolution** 1080 x 1920 pixels  
**Memory** 512MB RAM  
**Storage** 16/32/64GB  
**MicroSD Compatible?** Yes  
**Cameras** 13MP front-facing, 2MP front-facing  
**Video** 1080p

**Connectivity** 4G LTE  
**Dimensions** 136.6 x 69.8 x 7.9 mm  
**Weight** 130g  
**Battery** 2,600 mAh

**VERDICT:** An impressive offering with interesting but not integrated new software.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★



## Samsung Galaxy S4 Active

**Reviewed:** November 2013, price: £400

[www.samsung.com/uk](http://www.samsung.com/uk)

The Active S4 is ideal for people looking for a more protected smartphone, although it does make some sacrifices. Its design is too rugged for mainstream appeal and its display and camera aren't great. But it's a great hybrid for an underwater camera and is perfect for adventurous lifestyles.

**OS** Android 4.2.2 Jelly Bean  
**Processor** 1.9 GHz quad-core  
**Screen** 5 inches  
**Resolution** 1080 x 1920 pixels  
**Memory** 2GB RAM  
**Storage** 16GB  
**MicroSD Compatible?** Yes  
**Camera** 8MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing  
**Video** 1080p

**Connectivity** 4G LTE  
**Dimensions** 139.7 x 71.3 x 9.1 mm  
**Weight** 151g  
**Battery** 2,600 mAh

**VERDICT:** It may not be quite as good as its big brother, but it certainly has its purpose.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★







## Samsung Galaxy S5

Reviewed: June 2014, price: £530

[www.samsung.com/uk](http://www.samsung.com/uk)

The thing about Galaxy handsets is that their flaws are often matters of personal opinion. If you don't mind the samey design, plasticky build and irksome user interface, then the Galaxy S5 could be the best smartphone going. It's insanely powerful, has a blinding display and is even waterproof. If you care about substance over style then the Galaxy S5 is as good as it gets.

**OS** Android 4.4 KitKat  
**Processor** 2.5GHz quad-core  
**Screen** 5.1 inches  
**Resolution** 1920 x 1080 pixels  
**Memory** 2GB RAM  
**Storage** 16/32GB  
**MicroSD Compatible?** Yes  
**Camera** 16MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing  
**Video** 1080p

**Connectivity** 4G LTE  
**Dimensions** 142 mm x 72.5 mm x 8.1 mm  
**Weight** 145g  
**Battery** 2,800mAh

**VERDICT:** Behind a cheap-looking build lies the beastliest smartphone around.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★



## Samsung Galaxy S6 edge

Reviewed: June 2015, price: £760

[www.samsung.com/uk](http://www.samsung.com/uk)

This is currently one of the best looking smartphones on the market. That dual-curved screen makes the iPhone 6 Plus and HTC One M9 look boring in comparison. An insanely fast camera and superb performance means that the Samsung Galaxy S6 edge isn't just about looks either.

**OS** Android 5.0 Lollipop  
**Processor** octa-core Samsung Exynos 7420  
**Screen** 5.1-inches  
**Resolution** 1,440 x 2,560  
**Memory** 3GB RAM  
**Storage** 64GB/128GB  
**Micro SD compatible?** No  
**Rear camera** 16MP  
**Front camera** 5MP

**Video** 4K  
**Connectivity** 4G  
**Dimensions** 142.11 x 70.1 x 7 mm  
**Weight** 132g  
**Battery** 2,600 mAh

**VERDICT:** A phone that grabs attention with both its looks and performance.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★



## Sony Xperia L

Reviewed: August 2013, price: £249

[www.sonymobile.com](http://www.sonymobile.com)

This device includes some higher end specs for a low cost handset as well as a snappy camera, a high quality screen and impressive battery life. However, the odd design choices are a distraction and the screen does suffer from lag issues. Lower cost devices like the Nokia 620 offer more at a cheaper price. Access to the Google Play store potentially gives it an edge over the 620, if that's what you're after.

**Dimensions** 128.7x 65 x 9.7mm, 137g  
**Display** 4.3 inch, TFT capacitive touchscreen, 480x854 pixels, 228 ppi  
**OS** Android 4.1  
**CPU** Qualcomm MSM8230 Snapdragon dual core 1GHz  
**GPU** Adreno 305

**Memory** 1GB RAM  
**Storage** 8GB, microSD up to 32GB  
**Wireless** Wi-Fi 802.11 a/b/g/n  
**Camera** 8MP, autofocus, LED flash  
**Battery** Up to 9 hours (3G) - accurate

**VERDICT:** Not a bad choice for gamers on a budget, but for others there are better handsets.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★





## Sony Xperia SP

**Reviewed: July 2013, price: £290**

[www.sonymobile.com](http://www.sonymobile.com)

The Xperia SP has an excellent high definition screen, a fairly solid battery life and an interesting notification system involving a panel at the bottom of the phone which lights up with customisable colours when you get a message. However the phone's not as powerful as last year's flagships, is slightly bulky and there are rival phones to be had for less money, particularly if you're not fussed about 4G.

**OS** Android 4.1  
**Screen** 4.6inch / 720x1280 pixels  
**Input** Capacitive touchscreen  
**Camera** 8MP, VGA front  
**Video** Record / Playback  
**Audio** Music player / Stereo Bluetooth / 3.5mm jack  
**Memory** 8GB expandable via micro SD card

**Battery** 2370mAh

**VERDICT:** If 4G LTE isn't for you, the Xperia SP isn't quite the bargain it first seems.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★



## Sony Xperia T3

**Reviewed: July 2013, price: £290**

[www.sonymobile.com](http://www.sonymobile.com)

If it weren't for the existence of the Sony Xperia T2 Ultra, released less than nine months prior, the T3 would be a solid recommendation. It's a highly satisfactory smartphone with a premium build - but without anybody who would really need to buy it.

**OS** Android 4.4 Kit Kat  
**Processor** 1.4GHz quad-core  
**Screen** 5.3 inches  
**Resolution** 1,280 x 720 pixels  
**Memory** 1GB RAM  
**Storage** 8GB  
**Micro SD compatible?** Yes  
**Camera** 8MP rear-facing, 1.1MP front-facing  
**Video** 720p

**Connectivity** 4G  
**Dimensions** 150.7 x 77 x 7mm  
**Weight** 148g  
**Battery** 2,500mAh

**VERDICT:** A solid effort makes it a viable mid-range phablet choice.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★



## Sony Xperia Z

**Reviewed: April 2013, price: £499**

[www.sonymobile.com](http://www.sonymobile.com)

Sony's smartphone is a powerhouse in every way, let down only by some unusual design decisions. Water, dust and shock resistant, it's giant screen size will come down to personal preference, as will its unusual design. Otherwise it has all of Sony's bells and whistles, including some clever use of NFC with NFCs stereos, TVs and laptops.

**Dimensions** 139 x 71 x 7.9 mm and 146g  
**OS** Android 4.1.2 (Jelly Bean).  
**Screen** 5 inch, Capacitive touchscreen, 1080 x 1920  
**Processor** Qualcomm Krait quad-core 1.5 GHz  
**RAM** 2GB RAM  
**Storage** 16GB, microSD (to 32GB)

**Cameras** Main 13.1 MP, 4128x3096 pixels, autofocus, LED flash. Front - 2.2 MP, 1080p@30fps  
**Wireless** Wi-Fi 802.11, Bluetooth 4.0, NFC enabled  
**Ports** MicroUSB v2.0, MicroSD, 3.5mm audio jack.  
**Battery** Li-Ion 2330 mAh battery

**VERDICT:** A powerhouse phone, let down only by some design niggles.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★







## Sony Xperia Z1

**Reviewed:** December 2013, price: £475  
www.sonymobile.com

It's a little on the large side, but Sony's latest handset is rock solid, with powerful hardware and a unique design. Fans of the company will be right at home with the software that stores movies, music and games you've bought across other platforms. Add in a great camera and you've got a phone that stops just short of best in class.

**OS** Android 4.2 Jelly Bean  
**Processor** Snapdragon 800 quad-core 2.2GHz  
**Screen** 1080 x 1920 pixels, 5 inches  
**Memory** 2GB RAM  
**Storage** 16GB expandable up to 64GB via micro SD  
**Camera** 20.7 MP rear-facing, 2 MP front-facing  
**Video** 1080p  
**Wireless** Wi-Fi, Bluetooth 4.0  
**Ports** micro SD, microUSB  
**Battery** 3000 mAh  
**Dimensions** 144 x 74 x 8.5mm  
**Weight** 170g

**VERDICT:** Software makes it great for Sony fans, hardware makes it good for the rest

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
FEATURES ★★★★★  
USABILITY ★★★★★  
DESIGN ★★★★★



## Sony Xperia Z1 Compact

**Reviewed:** March 2014, price: £449  
www.sonymobile.com

If you hate giant displays and don't have the patience for Apple's iOS and its restrictive App Store, the Sony Xperia Z1 Compact your only choice, and a great one at that. Sony have done well to make a phone with the power to rival the mighty iPhone in an equally small package. In-built Sony-branded apps such as Walkman and PlayStation is an inherent plus, too. Fingers crossed for a KitKat 4.4 upgrade soon.

**OS** Android 4.3  
**Processor** Qualcomm Snapdragon 800  
**Screen** 4.3-inch HD Triluminos  
**Resolution** 720 x 1,280 pixels  
**Memory** 2GB  
**Storage** 16GB, expandable to 64GB  
**Camera** 20.7MP Exmor RS  
**Video** 720p  
**Connectivity** Wi-Fi, 3G, 4G, Bluetooth 4.0, NFC  
**Dimensions** 127 x 64.9 x 9.5mm  
**Weight** 137g  
**Battery** 2,300 mAh

**VERDICT:** The most powerful, best looking compact Android available. Simple.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
FEATURES ★★★★★  
USABILITY ★★★★★  
DESIGN ★★★★★



## Sony Xperia Z2

**Reviewed:** July 2014, price: £579  
www.sonymobile.com

The Z2 matches its rivals' power and usability. A lack of design innovation and similar specs might deter Z1 owners from upgrading, though, and the large size might not appeal to fans of smaller devices. That said, superior imaging and a powerful processor and CPU means it excels in the right places.

**OS** Android 4.4 KitKat  
**Processor** 2.3GHz quad-core  
**Screen** 5.2 inches  
**Resolution** 1080 x 1920 pixels  
**Memory** 3GB RAM  
**Storage** 16GB  
**MicroSD Compatible?** Yes  
**Camera** 20.7MP rear-facing, 2.2MP front-facing  
**Video** 720p  
**Connectivity** 4G  
**Dimensions** 146.8 x 73.3 x 8.2mm  
**Weight** 163g  
**Battery** 3,200mAh

**VERDICT:** An immaculate smartphone, if only a small step up from its predecessor.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
FEATURES ★★★★★  
USABILITY ★★★★★  
DESIGN ★★★★★





## Sony Xperia Z3

**Reviewed: December 2014, price: £549**  
[www.sonymobile.com](http://www.sonymobile.com)

We were all a little bit surprised when Sony elected to release a new flagship a matter of months after the Xperia Z2 hit shelves. After reviewing it though, the company's reasoning is obvious. The Z3 is a true flagship as worthy of your attention (and cash) as any other in this Buyer's Guide. The Z3 has premium design, hugely powerful internals, and an array of neat features. A very impressive device.

<b>OS</b> Android 4.4 Kit Kat	<b>Video</b> 4K
<b>Processor</b> 2.5GHz quad-core	<b>Connectivity</b> 4G
<b>Screen</b> 5.2 inches	<b>Dimensions</b> 146 x 72 x 7.3mm
<b>Resolution</b> 1,920 x 1,080 pixels	<b>Weight</b> 152g
<b>Memory</b> 3GB RAM	<b>Battery</b> 3,100mAh
<b>Storage</b> 16GB	
<b>Micro SD compatible?</b> Yes, up to 128GB	
<b>Camera</b> 20.7MP rear-facing, 2.2MP front-facing	

**VERDICT:** Sony's best full-sized offering yet, although the camera is aging a little now.

PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★★
DESIGN	★★★★★



## Sony Xperia Z3 Compact

**Reviewed: December 14, price: £429**  
[www.sonymobile.com](http://www.sonymobile.com)

The Xperia Z3 Compact is indisputably the most powerful compact Android ever made. We can't really slight it for anything, and no other Android phone in its size bracket can come close to matching it. It's remarkable that Sony has managed to squeeze almost the exact same technology from the Z3 into a smaller body. Finally, Android power-users have a valid option in the sub-five inch display category.

<b>OS</b> Android 4.4 Kit Kat	<b>Video</b> 4K
<b>Processor</b> 2.5GHz quad-core	<b>Connectivity</b> 4G
<b>Screen</b> 4.6 inches	<b>Dimensions</b> 127 x 64.9 x 8.6mm
<b>Resolution</b> 1,280 x 720 pixels	<b>Weight</b> 129g
<b>Memory</b> 2GB RAM	<b>Battery</b> 2,600mAh
<b>Storage</b> 16GB	
<b>Micro SD compatible?</b> Yes, up to 128GB	
<b>Camera</b> 20.7MP rear-facing, 2.2MP front-facing	

**VERDICT:** The definitive small-sized Android smartphone. The most powerful yet.

PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★★
DESIGN	★★★★★



## Vodafone Smart 4 Max

**Reviewed: July 2015, price: £129.99**  
[www.vodafone.co.uk](http://www.vodafone.co.uk)

If you crave a 6-inch 4G phablet for the equivalent of £2.50 a week over a year the Smart 4 Max is the only game in town. Purists will sneer at its elderly processor, low-res screen, and lack of "Lollipop". You'll be the one with around £400 more in your bank account. Just bear in mind it can only connect to Vodafone 4G network and you can't remove the Vodafone embedded software.

<b>OS</b> Android 4.4 KitKat	<b>Weight</b> 170g
<b>Processor</b> Snapdragon MSM8926	<b>Battery</b> 3,800 mAh
<b>Screen</b> 6-inches	
<b>Memory</b> 1GB RAM	
<b>Storage</b> 8GB	
<b>Camera</b> 13 MP	
<b>Video</b> Yes	
<b>Connectivity</b> 4G	
<b>Dimensions</b> 164 x 83.4 x 7.9 mm	

**VERDICT:** A great prices makes this worthwhile for first-time buyers.

PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★★
DESIGN	★★★★★







## Vodafone Smart 4 Power

Reviewed: February 2015, price: £79

[www.vodafone.co.uk](http://www.vodafone.co.uk)

The benchmark scores of a £79 phone were never going to impress anyone: the Smart 4 Power is not a handset for playing the latest taxing games on. That said, it's enough to deliver on the advantages of 4G. If instant information rather than instant gratification is what you're after, this phone delivers for the price.

**OS** Android 4.4 KitKat  
**Processor** 1.3GHz quad-core  
**Screen** 5 inches  
**Resolution** 720 x 1280  
**Memory** 1GB RAM  
**Storage** 4GB  
**Micro SD compatible?** Yes  
**Camera** 5MP rear-facing, VGA front-facing  
**Video** 720p

**Connectivity** 4G  
**Dimensions** 141 x 71.4 x 9.5mm  
**Weight** 162g  
**Battery** 3,000 mAh

**VERDICT:** Poor specs distract from what is an ergonomic and capable 4G starter.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★



## Yezz Andy A5

Reviewed: June 2014, price: £207

[www.sayyezz.com](http://www.sayyezz.com)

Camera phone fans on a tight budget should definitely seek out the Andy A5 for its affordable price and high-quality camera. If taking photos is not that important to you then you'll probably have seen the uninspired design and bland features a million times before.

**OS** Android 4.2 (Jelly Bean)  
**Processor** Quad-core 1.2GHz  
**Screen** 5 inches  
**Resolution** 540 x 960 pixels  
**Memory** 512MB RAM  
**Camera** 13MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing  
**Connectivity** 3G, wi-fi  
**Dimensions** 144.1 x 73.5 x 8.6mm

**Weight** 106g  
**Battery** 2,000mAh

**VERDICT:** A great camera, but the rest struggles against more bullish counterparts.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★



## YotaPhone 2

Reviewed: June 2014, price: £549

[www.yotaphone.com/gb-en/](http://www.yotaphone.com/gb-en/)

The YotaPhone 2 fixes almost all of the original's flaws, and turns the rear E Ink display from an impractical cherry on top, to one of the phone's main ingredients. There's no denying this quirky conversation-starter is for a niche audience, and a rich one at that. We can't wait to see what the YotaPhone 3 will bring - not least a price drop for this model.

**OS** Android 4.4 KitKat  
**Processor** Quad-core 2.3GHz Krait 400  
**Screen** 5 inches  
**Resolution** 1,080 x 1,920 pixels  
**Memory** 2GB RAM  
**Storage** 32GB  
**MicroSD compatible?** No  
**Camera** 8MP rear-facing, 2.1MP front-facing

**Video** 1080p  
**Connectivity** 4G  
**Dimensions** 144 x 69.5 x 8.9mm  
**Weight** 145g  
**Battery** 2,500mAh

**VERDICT:** If you're constantly reading on the go this is the best new smartphone in years.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★





## ZTE Blade Vec 4G

**Reviewed: February 2015, price: £153**  
[www.ztedevices.co.uk](http://www.ztedevices.co.uk)

Once you've fixed all the software customisations present on the Vec 4G, you're left with a pretty respectable performer for the price. The large, sharp display does a great job of quickly rendering web pages over 4G. Unfortunately, the Vec 4G battery's small capacity and demanding hardware mean you'll often find the phone emptied by the end of the day. It also has storage issues - namely no SD card slot.

**OS** Android 4.4 KitKat  
**Processor** 1.2GHz quad-core  
**Screen** 5 inches  
**Resolution** 720 x 1280  
**Memory** 1GB RAM  
**Storage** 16GB  
**Micro SD compatible?** No  
**Camera** 8MP rear-facing, 1MP front-facing  
**Video** 1080p  
**Connectivity** 4G  
**Dimensions** 142.3 x 70.4 x 7.8mm  
**Weight** 155g  
**Battery** 2,300 mAh

**VERDICT:** Solid specs for 4G at a reasonable price, but there are better options out there.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★



## ZTE Blade V

**Reviewed: February 2014, price: £99.99**  
[www.ztedevices.co.uk](http://www.ztedevices.co.uk)

A fantastic price makes the ZTE Blade V easy to recommend for first-time buyers. Anyone hoping to get the most out of a smartphone's apps and snaps should look elsewhere, but if you don't want to worry about a phone for the kids being broken or stolen, then this is your guy.

**OS** Android 4.1 Jelly Bean  
**Processor** Snapdragon S4 Play  
**Screen** 480 x 800, 4 inches  
**Memory** 1GB RAM  
**Storage** 4GB  
**Camera** 5 MP  
**Video** Yes  
**Connectivity** 3G  
**Dimensions** 126 x 64 x 10.9mm  
**Weight** 130g  
**Battery** 1,800 mAh

**VERDICT:** A great prices makes this worthwhile for first-time buyers.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★



## ZTE Blade S6

**Reviewed: August 2015 price: £169.99**  
[www.ztedevices.co.uk](http://www.ztedevices.co.uk)

The ZTE Blade S6 is definitely more than just a cheap iPhone 6 rip off. A decent camera helps it stand out from the rest of the mid-range crowd, whilst performance is surprisingly decent for a phone of this price. It's let down by poor build quality and software that lacks certain features. The price is the most attractive, however, and those negatives shouldn't put you off this decent mid-range phone.

**OS** Android 5.0 Lollipop  
**Processor** Snapdragon 615  
**Screen** 5-inches  
**Memory** 2GB RAM  
**Storage** 16GB  
**Camera** 13 MP  
**Video** Yes  
**Connectivity** 4G  
**Dimensions** 144 x 70.7 x 7.7 mm  
**Weight** 154g  
**Battery** 2,400mAh

**VERDICT:** An affordable phone with surprisingly decent performance.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★







## Amazon Kindle Fire HD 8.9"

Reviewed: May 2013, price: £229/259

[www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk)

A good looking e-reader with tablet capabilities, limited by Amazon's annoying operating system and app eco-system, and an annoyingly slow browser. This device will doubtless be a commercial success, with its branding and ease of use, but for the more serious user there are much better tablets out there.

**Dimensions** 240 x 164 x 8.8 mm  
**OS** Customized Android 4.0  
**Screen** 8.9 inch IPS LCD capacitive touchscreen  
**Resolution** 1920 x 1200, 254 ppi  
**Processor** TI OMAP 4470 dual-core 1.5 GHz Cortex-A9  
**GPU** PowerVR SGX544  
**RAM** 1 GB RAM  
**Storage** 16 GB/32 GB  
**Cameras** front facing 1.3MP with 720p video  
**Wireless** 802.11 a/b/g/n, dual-band  
**Ports** USB 2.0, 3.5mm audio jacks, Bluetooth A2DP  
**Battery life** 10 hours (accurate)

**VERDICT:** A solid, functional tablet which is limited by its Amazon associations.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★



## Acer Iconia Tab 8

Reviewed: April 2015, price: £140

[www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk)

Acer has managed to do what manufacturers of every cheap tablet should aspire to: create a tablet that is priced extremely competitively, but which performs to a standard much higher than you'd expect for its cost. A few compromises have been made along the way, but this is still a budget slab that's well worth considering.

**OS** Android 4.4 KitKat  
**Processor** 1.3GHz quad-core  
**Screen** 8 inches  
**Resolution** 1,280 x 800 pixels  
**Memory** 2GB RAM  
**Storage** 16GB/32GB  
**Micro SD compatible?** Yes, up to 32GB  
**Camera** 5MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing  
**Video** 720p  
**Connectivity** Wi-fi only  
**Dimensions** 215 x 130 x 8.5mm  
**Weight** 360g  
**Battery** 4,600mAh

**VERDICT:** It has a few flaws, but for less than £150 you should look past them.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★



## Advent Vega Tegra Note 7

Reviewed: April 2014, price: £140

[www.nvidia.co.uk](http://www.nvidia.co.uk)

It's a contender, alright. Aside from some clunky desing issues, the Advent Vega Tegra Note 7 is a powerful and punchy little machine. If you're after a compact and affordable tablet its speed sets it aside from its rivals as a device that's great for gaming, customising images and browsing the web.

**OS** Android Jelly Bean 4.3  
**Processor** Nvidia Tegra 4  
**Screen** 7 inches  
**Resolution** 1,280 x 800 pixels  
**Memory** 1GB RAM  
**Storage** 16GB  
**Connectivity** Wi-fi, Bluetooth 4.0  
**Dimensions** 119 x 199 x 9.6mm  
**Weight** 320g  
**Battery** 8 hours

**VERDICT:** Its speed sets it apart from its competition. A cheap and capable device.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★





## Amazon Kindle Fire HDX

**Reviewed: January 2014, price: £199-329**  
[www.amazon.co.uk/kindle](http://www.amazon.co.uk/kindle)

The Kindle Fire HDX is around £100 more than the Fire but the improved screen and processor justifies the extra cost. The real human Help feature will be a boon to tablet newbies; experienced users will regard it as a gimmick. The HDX is a top-rate device – but if you're not a regular Amazon customer you're better off with a Nexus.

**OS** Amazon customised Android OS, v4.1.2  
**PROCESSOR** Snapdragon 800 2.2GHz quad-core  
**SCREEN** 1902 x 1200 pixels, 7 inches  
**MEMORY** 2GB RAM  
**STORAGE** 16GB, 32GB, 64GB versions available  
**CAMERA** 8MP front-facing

**VIDEO** 720HD  
**WIRELESS** Wi-Fi (optional Vodafone 4G version)  
**PORTS** microUSB  
**DIMENSIONS** 131.8 x 66.9 x 9.9 mm  
**WEIGHT** 302g

**VERDICT:** A significant update to the Fire and ideal for Amazon users.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★



## Apple iPad Mini

**Reviewed: December 2012, price: £269**  
[www.apple.com/uk](http://www.apple.com/uk)

The iPad Mini represents Apple playing it safe, which is to say, disappointing. This is little more than an iPad 2, with all its limitations – a low res screen and weak processor power – shrunk down to an odd 7.9-inch size. It is also overpriced, the Google Nexus 7 offers superior performance for £100 less. Despite its luxurious design, you really are paying for little more than 4G support, and Apple's App Store. Average.

**OS** iOS 6.0.1  
**Screen** 7.9-inch LED-backlit IPS LCD  
**Resolution** 768 x 1024 pixels at 162 pixels per inch  
**Input** Capacitive touchscreen  
**CPU** Apple A5 1GHz dual core  
**GPU** PowerVR SGX543MP2  
**Memory** 512MB  
**Storage** 16/32/64GB

**Camera** 5MP rear facing, 1.2MP front facing  
**Video** 1920x1080 (1080P HD) at 30fps. Video stabilised  
**Wireless** Wi-Fi 802.11 a/b/g/n, dual-band, Bluetooth 4.0  
**Ports** 3.5mm audio jack, Apple Lightning port (USB 2.0)  
**Size** 200 x 134.7 x 7.2mm  
**Weight** 308g

**VERDICT:** Little more than a shrunk iPad 2 with 4G. Disappointing.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★



## Apple iPad 3

**Reviewed: April 2012, price: £399**  
[www.apple.com/uk](http://www.apple.com/uk)

The new iPad boasts the highest-resolution display of any tablet, as well as an improved 5MP camera and better connectivity. Not to mention a high-powered new processor which makes it the most powerful iPad ever, too. Though some may resist the upgrade path, the unrivalled Retina display is a subtle but deeply appealing feature which will become more and more desirable. The new iPad is by far the best tablet around

**OS** iOS 5  
**Screen** 9.7-inch TFT  
**Resolution** 1536 x 2048 pixels  
**Input** Capacitive touchscreen  
**Processor** 1GHz Cortex-A9  
**Memory** 1GB  
**Storage** 16/32/64GB  
**Camera** 5MP rear-facing, 0.3MP front-facing

**Flash** No  
**Video** 1080p HD  
**Wireless** 802.11a/b/g/n Wi-Fi, Bluetooth 4.0  
**Ports** 3.5mm audio jack, proprietary Apple connector  
**Standby time** 720 hours  
**Use time** 9 hours  
**Size** 241 x 186 x 9mm  
**Weight** 662g

**VERDICT:** There's simply no contest – the new iPad is the best tablet in the world.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★







## Apple iPad 4

**Reviewed:** January 2013, price: £399  
[www.apple.com/uk](http://www.apple.com/uk)

A rather cheeky move by Apple to release the iPad 4 (or 'iPad with Retina Display') just months after the iPad 3. All it really adds is a new processor (the iPhone 5's A6X) and Apple's new lightning connector. However, this means it remains as the best tablet money can buy - and Apple's App Store and its 300,000 dedicated tablet apps only make the proposition more enticing.

**OS** iOS 6.0.1,  
**Screen** 9.7 inch LED  
**Resolution** 1536 x 2048 pixels at 264 ppi pixel density  
**CPU** Apple A6X, Dual-core  
**GPU** PowerVR SGX554MP4,  
**Memory** 1GB RAM  
**Storage** 16/32/64 GB storage  
**Camera** 5MP rear facing, 1.2MP front facing  
**Video** 1080P HD at 30fps  
**Wireless** Wi-Fi 802.11 a/b/g/n, Bluetooth 4.0  
**Cellular** 4G, 3G, 2G  
**Ports** Lightning Connector (USB2.0) and 3.5mm audio jack,  
**Dimensions** 241.2 x 185.7 x 9.4 mm  
**Weight** 662 g

**VERDICT:** The best tablet money can buy.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★



## Archos 79 Platinum

**Reviewed:** April 2014, price: £150  
[www.archos.com](http://www.archos.com)

With so many budget tablets to choose from the Archos 79 Platinum has no features or unique selling points to attract the consumer in a saturated market. Its hardware is woefully underpowered, its features are bog standard and it is at least £10 too expensive. Its attractive looks are not enough to redeem it. The bottom line is that it should have never been conceived.

**OS** Android 4.2 Jelly Bean  
**Processor** Quad-core A9 1.6GHz  
**Screen** 7.85 inches  
**Resolution** 1,024 x 768 pixels  
**Memory** 1GB RAM  
**Storage** 8GB  
**Camera** 2MP rear-facing  
**Connectivity** Wi-fi, Bluetooth  
**Dimensions** 201 x 137 x 8mm  
**Weight** 366g  
**Battery** Lithium Polymer

**VERDICT:** There is no reason you ever would, or should, buy it. Avoid, avoid, avoid.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★



## Archos 101 XS 2

**Reviewed:** February 2014, price: £250  
[www.archos.com](http://www.archos.com)

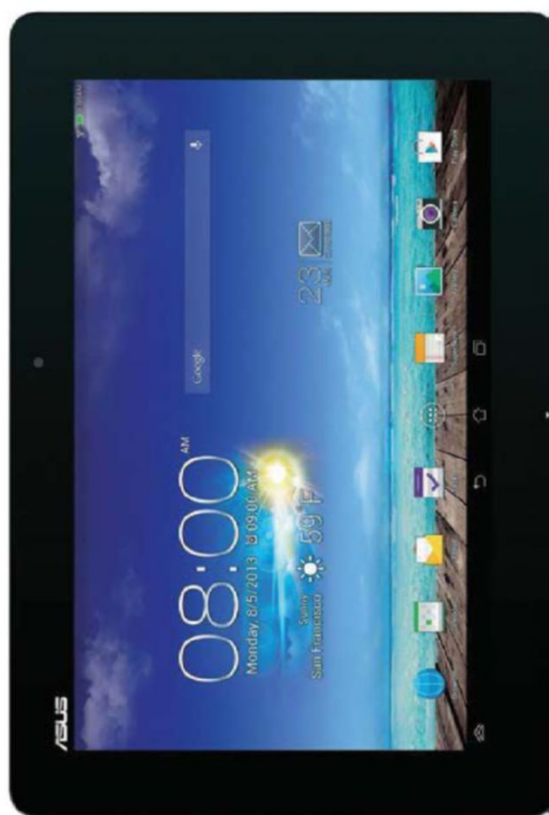
A couple of years ago, the 101 XS would have had us singing Archos' praises, but by today's standards its processing power and screen quality fall short. It might, though, find a home with users limited to spending £250 on a 10-inch tablet

**OS** Android 4.2.2  
**SCREEN** 10.1-inch/1,280 x 800 pixels  
**CAMERA** 2MP rear, 2MP front  
**VIDEO** Record/playback  
**AUDIO** Music player/3.5mm jack  
**MEMORY** 16GB expandable via microSD  
**DIMENSIONS** 273 x 169 x 10.1mm (tablet), 273 x 169 x 5mm (keyboard)  
**WEIGHT** 636g (tablet), 200g (keyboard)

**VERDICT:** A great price is let down by a poor screen and cheap build.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★





## Asus Transformer Pad TF701T

**Reviewed: February 2014, price: £429**

[www.asus.com](http://www.asus.com)

The Asus Transformer Pad TF701T packs a beautiful screen and the keyboard dock is well thought out. But dated software and the threat of a Google Nexus 10 sequel make this a niche device. Do you really need a keyboard? The iPad mini begs to differ.

**OS** Android 4.3 (via an over-the-air update)  
**SCREEN** 10.1-inch/2,560 x 1,600 pixels  
**INPUT** Capacitive touchscreen  
**CAMERA** 5MP rear, 1.2MP front  
**VIDEO** Record/playback  
**AUDIO** Music player/3.5mm jack

**MEMORY** 32/64GB  
**BATTERY** Tablet 31Wh, dock 16Wh

## Asus VivoPad

**Reviewed: October 2013, price: £399**

[www.asus.com](http://www.asus.com)

This delivers on the promise of a being a Windows 8 PC in tablet form, with access to powerful apps like Photoshop. Managing this on a 10-inch tablet is no small feat. That said, the Intel Atom processor keeps it from reaching its full potential, struggling with many of the things you would want to use a PC for. The lack of storage hinders it further.

**OS** Windows 8  
**Processor** Intel Atom Z2760 dual-core  
**Screen** 10.1-inch (1366 x 768 pixels) IPS display  
**Memory** 2GB RAM  
**Storage** 64GB SSD  
**Camera** 8 MP rear-facing, 2 MP front-facing  
**Video** 1080p

**Connectivity** Wi-Fi, Bluetooth 4.0  
**Ports** Micro HDMI, Micro SD, Micro USB  
**Dimensions** 262.5 x 171 x 9.7 mm  
**Weight** 580g  
**Battery** Li-Po 6,760 mAh



## Google Nexus 9

**Reviewed: February 2015, price: £319**

[www.google.co.uk/nexus](http://www.google.co.uk/nexus)

The Google Nexus 9 is an impressive and welcome return to the tablet market for HTC, and a jewel of a gadget for Android 5.0 to debut on. The size is right, and if you know for sure you want an Android tablet, it's your best bet - it's certainly the best slate HTC has ever made - but for the money we'd still go for the quality build and thriving eco-system of an iPad.

**OS** Android 5.0 Lollipop  
**Screen** 8.9-inch  
**Resolution** 2048 x 1536 pixels  
**Processor** Tegra K1 2.3GHz  
**Memory** 2GB RAM  
**Storage** 16GB/32GB internal  
**Camera** 8MP rear-facing, 1.6MP front-facing  
**Flash** No  
**Video** 1080p HD

**VERDICT:** It packs fast hardware but can't compete with the iPad Air or Nexus range

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★



**VERDICT:** A good attempt at making a PC tablet, but too underpowered.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★



**VERDICT:** The best tablet on the market - if you insist on Android, that is.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★







## Google Nexus 10

**Reviewed:** February 2013, price: £319

[www.google.co.uk/nexus](http://www.google.co.uk/nexus)

Finally, the Android tablet everyone's been waiting for - except Apple. This is a tablet that can go head to head with the best in the Apple iPad stable - it has a powerful processor, a Retina Display quality screen, the latest version of Android. Along with the Nexus 7, this is the best tablet Android users can buy. The only flaws are an uninspired body, and a dearth of tablet specific apps.

<b>OS</b> Android 4.2 (Jelly Bean)	<b>Cameras</b> 5 MP (main), 1.9 MP (front)
<b>Dimensions</b> 263.9 x 177.6 x 8.9 mm, 603g	<b>Wireless</b> Wi-Fi, Bluetooth
<b>Screen</b> 10-inch	<b>NFC</b> Android Beam
<b>Resolution</b> 2560 x 1600 pixels	<b>Storage</b> 16 GB/32 GB
<b>Input</b> Super PLS TFT capacitive touch-screen	<b>Connectivity</b> Micro USB, Micro HDMI, 3.5mm headphone jack
<b>CPU</b> Exynos 5, Dual-core ARM Cortex-A15	<b>Battery</b> 9,000 mAh
<b>RAM</b> 2 GB	

**VERDICT:** The best Android tablet of 2013 slips behind the iPad only due to apps.

PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★★
DESIGN	★★★★★



## HP Slate 7

**Reviewed:** October 2013, price: £125

[www.hp.com](http://www.hp.com)

The steel frame makes the Slate 7 an impressive sight and its audio uses Beats technology to great effect. The fantastic price will help it to undercut some of its rivals, though the slow processor and low quality camera keep it from besting them elsewhere.

<b>OS</b> Android 4.1 Jelly Bean	<b>Video</b> 720p
<b>Processor</b> Dual-core 1.6 GHz Cortex-A9	<b>Dimensions</b> 197.1 x 116.1 x 10.7 mm
<b>Screen</b> 600 x 1024 pixels, 7.0 inches	<b>Weight</b> 372 g
<b>Memory</b> 1 GB RAM	<b>Battery</b> non-removable, 5h media time
<b>Storage</b> 8 GB expandable to 32GB via SD card	
<b>Camera</b> 3.15 MP pixel rear facing, VGA front facing	

**VERDICT:** Great audio and build, but corners have been cut to keep costs down.

PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★★
DESIGN	★★★★★



## Lenovo ThinkPad 8

**Reviewed:** September 2014, price: £424

[www.lenovo.com](http://www.lenovo.com)

If you just want a device for general tasks then you can find better alternatives within Lenovo's Yoga range of Android slates, and elsewhere. If you're a fan of Windows and in search of a bulkier device that offers plenty of productivity tools, then the ThinkPad is an (almost) viable option.

<b>OS</b> Windows 8.1	<b>Video</b> 1080p
<b>Processor</b> 2.4GHz quad-core	<b>Connectivity</b> 4G
<b>Screen</b> 8.3 inches	<b>Dimensions</b> 8.83 x 5.2 x 0.35 inches
<b>Resolution</b> 1,200 x 1,920 pixels	<b>Weight</b> 439g
<b>Memory</b> 2GB RAM	
<b>Storage</b> 32GB	
<b>Micro SD compatible?</b> Yes	
<b>Camera</b> 8MP rear-facing, 2.2MP front-facing	

**VERDICT:** Even with so few Windows tablets available the ThinkPad still fails to stand out.

PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★★
DESIGN	★★★★★





## Lenovo Miix 2

**Reviewed:** July 2014, price: £255

[www.microsoft.com/surface](http://www.microsoft.com/surface)

With solid performance across the board, frequently usable built-in apps and compact size the Miix 2 is a small but surprisingly versatile slate. Despite the limitations that come with the Windows OS, it performs general tasks well and, for the price, won't let you down. With 3G capability you can even connect to the internet on the move. Overall, it offers plenty of pleasant surprises to combat the weaknesses of its OS.

**OS** Windows 8.1  
**Processor** 1.3GHz quad-core  
**Screen** 8 inches  
**Resolution** 1280 x 800 pixels  
**Memory** 2GB  
**Storage** 32GB  
**MicroSD compatible?** Yes  
**Camera** 5MP rear-facing, 2MP front-facing  
**Video** 1080p

**Connectivity** 3G  
**Dimensions** 8.3 x 215.6 x 131mm  
**Weight** 350g  
**Battery** 4,730mAh

**VERDICT:** A small but substantial Windows offering that still trails its Android rivals.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★



## Lenovo Yoga Tablet 2

**Reviewed:** March 2015, price: £249

[www.lenovo.com](http://www.lenovo.com)

Lenovo certainly deserves credit for trying to break the 'black slab' mould. It's an interesting attempt at something different, but unless you have a real need to hang it up from the ceiling or to perch it upright on a train table every day its mediocre internals and display don't represent that much value for money.

**OS** Android 4.4 KitKat  
**Processor** 1.86GHz quad-core  
**Screen** 10.1 inches  
**Resolution** 1920 x 1200 pixels  
**Memory** 2GB RAM  
**Storage** 16GB  
**Micro SD compatible?** Yes, up to 64GB  
**Camera** 8MP rear-facing, 1.6MP front-facing

**Video** 720p  
**Connectivity** 4G optional  
**Dimensions** 255 x 183 x 7.2 mm  
**Weight** 619g  
**Battery** 9,600 mAh

**VERDICT:** A nice idea, but one we don't fully buy into. Not quite up to scratch.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★



## Microsoft Surface 2 Pro

**Reviewed:** February 2014, price: £720

[www.microsoft.com/surface](http://www.microsoft.com/surface)

We can't fault Microsoft's ambition for the powerful Surface Pro 2 to become your all-in-one portable work and play device. It's got a great display and solid hardware but a lack of dedicated apps, software compromises and stiff - cheaper-competition make it a tough sell.

**OS** Windows 8.1  
**Screen** 10.6 inches/1,920x1,080 pixels  
**Input** Capacitive touchscreen  
**Camera** 720p-resolution front and rear  
**Video** Record/playback  
**Audio** Music player/3.5mm jack  
**Memory** 64GB / 128GB / 256GB / 512GB  
**Battery** 48Wh

**VERDICT:** Price holds back what is an otherwise excellent work/play hybrid.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★







## Microsoft Surface Pro 3

**Reviewed: November 2014, price: £640**  
[www.microsoft.com/surface](http://www.microsoft.com/surface)

From software to hardware and even design the Surface Pro 3 is a wonderful piece of kit. It's refreshing to come across a tablet with grander ideals than the norm, challenging us to rethink the notion of the medium. For most people this could genuinely replace their laptop. It's just a shame, and an almost inexcusable mistake, that the keyboard which is so integral to its function is sold as an expensive extra.

<b>OS</b> Windows 8.1	<b>Micro SD compatible?</b> Yes, up to 128GB
<b>Processor</b> 1.5GHz Intel core i3/2.9GHz Intel core i5/3.7GHz Intel core i7	<b>Camera</b> 5MP rear-facing, 5MP front-facing
<b>Screen</b> 12 inches	<b>Video</b> 1080p
<b>Resolution</b> 2,160 x 1,440 pixels	<b>Connectivity</b> Wi-fi only
<b>Memory</b> 4GB/8GB RAM	<b>Dimensions</b> 292.1mm x 201.4mm x 9.1mm
<b>Storage</b> 64GB/128GB/256GB/512GB	<b>Weight</b> 800g
	<b>Battery</b> 42Wh

**VERDICT:** The first tablet with enough function to conceivably replace a laptop.

PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★★
DESIGN	★★★★★



## Nokia Lumia 2520

**Reviewed: February 2014, price: £399**  
[www.nokia.com](http://www.nokia.com)

The Windows-run Lumia 2520 is a decent first effort from Nokia - and it's certainly one of the more attractive and solid pieces of tablet hardware on the market. It has a few issues with the weight and a lackluster camera but overall we have no trouble recommending this to Windows 8.1 and Lumia fans.

<b>OS</b> Windows 8.1	<b>Dimensions</b> 168 x 267 x 8.9mm, 615g
<b>Screen</b> 10.1 inches, 1,920 x 1,080 pixels, 218PPI	<b>Battery</b> 8120 mAh
<b>Processor</b> Qualcomm Snapdragon 800	
<b>Memory</b> 2GB	
<b>Camera</b> 6.7MP with Carl Zeiss lens	
<b>Audio</b> Music player/3.5mm jack	

**VERDICT:** A rock solid first effort from Nokia in this market with powerful specs.

PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★★
DESIGN	★★★★★



## Samsung Galaxy Tab 3 Kids

**Reviewed: February 2014, price: £250**  
[www.nokia.com](http://www.nokia.com)

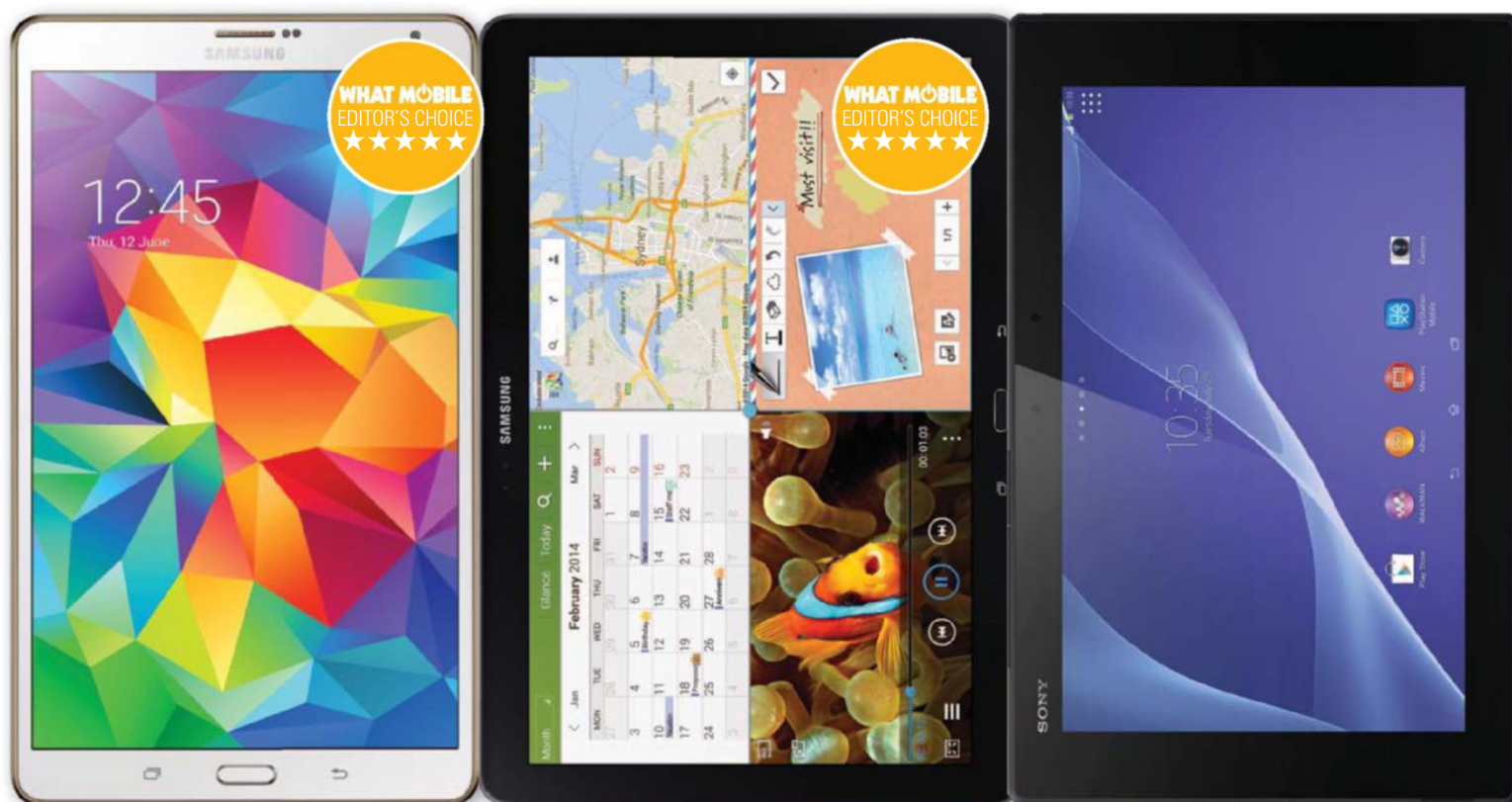
The Tab 3 Kids is surprisingly robust, with a solid camera, great battery, fantastic educational apps and software to suit kids. But the premium design doesn't feel like it was meant to be enjoyed by young users and we'd suggest going with a company that specialises in the market rather than one that's testing it out.

<b>OS</b> Android 4.1	<b>Wireless</b> WiFi, Bluetooth 3.0
<b>Processor</b> Dual-core 1.2GHz	<b>Ports</b> micro-USB, microSD
<b>Screen</b> 600 x 1,024 pixels, 7 inches	<b>Dimensions</b> 188 x 111.1 x 9.9mm
<b>Memory</b> 1GB RAM	<b>Weight</b> 306g
<b>Storage</b> 8GB/16GB, expandable up to 64GB	<b>Battery</b> Li-Ion 4,000 mAh
<b>Camera</b> 3.15MP (back), 1.3MP (front)	
<b>Video</b> 720p@30fps	

**VERDICT:** A little too premium for the market it's aimed at.

PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★★
DESIGN	★★★★★





## Samsung Galaxy Tab S

**Reviewed:** October 2014, price: £319

[www.samsung.com/uk](http://www.samsung.com/uk)

While the Tab S may not be a radical departure from other Android tablets, it encompasses everything that is great about a top-notch Samsung product. It's enough to rebuild the Korean giant's brand image, and proof that the company can still surprise us with a fantastic all-round product.

## Samsung Galaxy Note Pro 12.2

**Reviewed:** May 2014, price: £649

[www.samsung.com/uk](http://www.samsung.com/uk)

One of the biggest displays ever seen on a tablet - at no detriment to quality. Combine that with solid design and a super powerful processor to run loads of unique applications and the NotePRO 12.2 is arguably the best tablet on the market. It's certainly the best Android slate, although it's definitely priced as such.

## Sony Xperia Z2 Tablet

**Reviewed:** June 2014, price: £399

[www.sony.co.uk](http://www.sony.co.uk)

If looks could kill, Sony murdered the competition. Add to that a powerful processor and decent screen size and you have a great new addition to the high-end tablet market. Innovative features like dust and water resistance are impressive too, and manage to make up the expensive price tag.

**OS** Android 4.4 Kit Kat  
**Processor** 2.3GHz quad-core  
**Screen** 8.4 inches  
**Resolution** 2,560 x 1,600 pixels  
**Memory** 3GB RAM  
**Storage** 16GB, 32GB  
**Micro SD compatible?** Yes  
**Camera** 8MP rear-facing, 2.1MP front-facing  
**Video** 1080p

**Connectivity** 4G  
**Dimensions** 125.6 x 212.8 x 6.6mm  
**Weight** 294g  
**Battery** 4,900mAh

**OS** Android 4.4 KitKat  
**Processor** Octa-core (1.9GHz + 1.3GHz quad)  
**Screen** 12.2 inches  
**Resolution** 2,560 x 1,600 pixels  
**Memory** 3GB RAM  
**Storage** 32GB/64GB  
**Camera** 8MP rear/2MP front-facing

**Video** 1,080p Full HD  
**Connectivity** Wi-fi only  
**Dimensions** 295.6 x 204 x 7.95mm  
**Weight** 750g  
**Battery** 9,500mAh

**OS** Android OS v4.4.2 (KitKat) 4G LTE  
**Screen** 10.1 inches  
**Processor** Quad-core 2.3 GHz  
**Memory** 3GB  
**Storage** 16GB, microSD up to 64GB  
**Camera** 8.1MP rear, 2.2MP front  
**Battery** 6,000mAh  
**Network** Wi-fi connectivity,

**VERDICT:** Simply put, it's the best Android tablet on the market.

**VERDICT:** Big, beautiful, functional and priced to match. Android's finest.

**VERDICT:** A good all-round tablet, with looks that set it apart from the rest of the flagships.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★



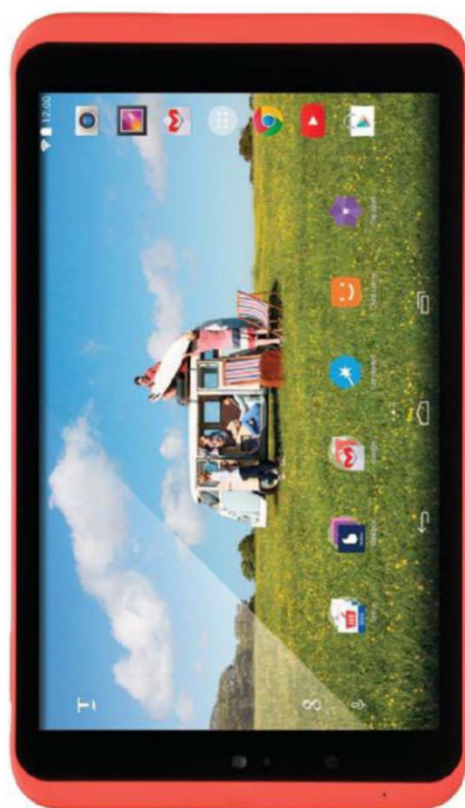
PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★



PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★







## Tesco Hudl 2

**Reviewed:** January 2015, price: £129

[www.tesco.com/direct/hudl](http://www.tesco.com/direct/hudl)

This is no Tesco Value attempt at a tablet. Make no mistake, the Hudl 2 is a fantastic Android slate that's great value for money. Sure, it's not on the cutting edge like Google's Nexus series of devices, but if all you want is a gadget to casually surf the web, watch some films or read a few comics, this device is every bit as capable as an iPad mini.

**OS** Android 4.4 KitKat  
**Processor** 1.83GHz quad-core  
**Screen** 8.3 inches  
**Resolution** 1,920 x 1,200 pixels  
**Memory** 2GB RAM  
**Storage** 16GB  
**MicroSD compatible?** Yes  
**Camera** 5MP rear-facing, 1.2MP front-facing  
**Video** 720p at 30fps

**Connectivity** Wi-fi  
**Dimensions** 224 x 128 x 9mm  
**Weight** 410g  
**Battery** 4,900mAh

**VERDICT:** Don't be fooled - Tesco is now a serious contender in the tablet space.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★



## Toshiba Excite Pure

**Reviewed:** February 2014, price: £250

[www.toshiba.co.uk](http://www.toshiba.co.uk)

The Toshiba Excite Pure's £250 price is attractive but its display is far too faded. It means apps and the like don't look very good. It might appeal to families looking for a cheap way to keep the kids entertained but little else. Even so, the slow processor and useless apps force us to recommend you look elsewhere.

**OS** Android v4.2 (Jelly Bean)  
**Processor** Nvidia Tegra 3  
**Memory** 1GB  
**Storage** 16GB  
**Screen** 1280 x 800 pixels, 10.1 inches  
**Video** HD  
**Audio** Stereo  
**Dimensions** 261.6 x 177.8 x 10.2mm

**VERDICT:** It's got a cheap price tag but the poor display and tech shows why.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★



## Vodafone Smart Tab 4G

**Reviewed:** June 2015, price: £125

[www.vodafone.co.uk](http://www.vodafone.co.uk)

Attractive, cheap and feature-packed; the Vodafone Smart Tab 4G looks more upmarket than its affordable £125 pricing suggests. It's let down by a slow processor, but that shouldn't put you off what is basically well-designed and ideal family tablet.

**OS** Android KitKat 4.4  
**Processor** 1.2 GHz Quad-Core  
**Screen** 8.0-inches  
**Resolution** 1280x800-pixels  
**Memory** 1GB RAM  
**Storage** 8GB  
**Micro SD compatible?** Yes, up to 64GB  
**Rear camera** 5MP  
**Front camera** 2MP

**Connectivity** GSM/EDGE/3G/4G/HSPA+/LTE  
**Dimensions** 209 x 128 x 7.99mm  
**Weight** 309g  
**Battery** 4060 mAh

**VERDICT:** An affordable and easy-to-use tablet that offers something for everyone.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★  
 USABILITY ★★★★★  
 DESIGN ★★★★★





### Asus ZenWatch

**Reviewed: April 2015, price: £204**

[www.asus.com/uk/](http://www.asus.com/uk/)

The Asus ZenWatch is handsome enough, but fails to stand out from the crowd of Android Wear devices. Google's wearable OS still feels like a solution in search of a problem - unless you have a specific use in mind for its features you may want to hold out for the next generation of devices.

**VERDICT:** Attractive, but with too many caveats to recommend outright.



### Fitbit Flex

**Reviewed: August 2014, price: £79.99**

[www.fitbit.com](http://www.fitbit.com)

Minor niggles aside, the Fitbit Flex is possibly the best fitness wearable on the market. Its features are so diverse, and its app so beautiful and intuitive, that it can be tailored to just about anyone's lifestyle. With interchangeable bands in a variety of colours, and a low price, the Flex is practically a must-buy.

**VERDICT:** A fantastic companion app and great functionality put the Flex on top.



### LG G Watch R

**Reviewed: May 2015, price: £180.00**

[www.jawbone.com](http://www.jawbone.com)

The LG G Watch R may be one of the most mature-looking smartwatches yet, but not everyone will find it attractive – or appreciate Android Wear's limitations. The market's set to explode with the advent of the Apple Watch and the Pebble Time. Unless you're desperate for what the LG G Watch R does right now, it's hard to see the value in yet another second-generation Android Wear watch.

**VERDICT:** Although attractive, it has limited functionality compared to other smartwatches.





## Nike+ Fuelband SE

Reviewed: June 2014, price: £89

[www.nike.com](http://www.nike.com)

The Nike+ Fuelband SE is close to being the perfect sports tracker. It's social capabilities combined with its numerous features to keep you motivated ensure that it will be a permanent mainstay in any gym addicts kit bag. You might not be so keen on wearing it every single day, though, with its appealing design being more clearly tailored to a casual setting. Plus, its lack of waterproofing could be a deal-breaker for some.

**VERDICT:** When it comes to fitness, Nike is a name you can trust - this is no exception.



## Samsung Galaxy Gear 2

Reviewed: June 2014, price: £250

[www.samsung.com](http://www.samsung.com)

The design needs a rethink but the Samsung Galaxy Gear 2 provides decent fitness tracking features and a good music player. Trimming down on other functions, however, would have made for a slimmer and sleeker product. It would be unfair to say this is a needless addition as it packs a lot of functions, but it's an expensive product that's hindered by an impractical design and redundant features.

**VERDICT:** A decent effort that has since been eclipsed by superior Android Wear devices.



## Sony Smartband SWR10

Reviewed: September 2014, price: £80

[www.sony.com](http://www.sony.com)

A mishmash of features means that the SWR10 occupies an odd space in the wearable tech world. But at least it is a space all of its own. No similar device can offer you all of the features of the SWR10, though that's irrelevant if those features don't suit your needs.

On the plus side, a large number of the SWR10's drawbacks are with its partner app, and apps can always be improved.

**VERDICT:** Potential to be a serious contender, but a hard sell for most in its current state.



# Wearable compatibility guide



**LG  
G Watch R**



**Pebble  
Watch**



**Samsung  
Gear Live**



**Sony  
Smartwatch 3**



**Garmin  
Vivofit**



**Archos  
Activity Tracker**



**iPhone  
6 / 6 plus**

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**HTC  
One M8**

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**Samsung  
Galaxy S5**

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**Sony Xperia  
Z3 / Z3 Compact**

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